



Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond
December 10 – 18, 2015

Table of Contents

The following news stories are divided into the following sections.

| | |
|--|------------|
| Aboriginal Arts & Culture | 2 |
| Aboriginal Business & Finance | 23 |
| Aboriginal Community Development | 38 |
| Aboriginal Crime, Justice & Law Enforcement | 59 |
| Aboriginal Education & Youth | 82 |
| Aboriginal Health | 106 |
| Aboriginal History | 116 |
| Aboriginal Identity & Representation | 120 |
| Aboriginal Inequality & Poverty | 124 |
| Aboriginal Jobs & Labour | 130 |
| Aboriginal Politics | 140 |
| Energy, the Environment & Natural Resources | 165 |
| Land Claims & Treaty Rights | 185 |
| Special Topic: Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women | 195 |
| Special Topic: Residential Schools, TRC, & '60s Scoop | 226 |
| Special Topic: International Indigenous Populations | 259 |

Aboriginal Arts & Culture

Canada's New Typeface Unifies the Country's Many Languages

Date of Publication: 12.10.15. 12.10.15

Time of Publication: 7:00 am. 7:00 am

If the United States were to have a typeface, it might be something like Highway Gothic, the sans-serif, designed by Ted Forbes, that's plastered across our nation's road signs. Or maybe Helvetica, the famed font found just about everywhere, including your cereal box's nutrition label. Some people, the ones less impressed with the government's competence, might even say Comic Sans.

While the United States has yet to determine its typographic identity, its northern neighbor recently chose one. [Canada 150](#), created for the country's 150th birthday, is a typographic family that unites the Latin characters of English and French with the syllabic characters of the country's many indigenous dialects. It is the work of Raymond Larabie, a typographer who says he sought to create a font that might help bring together Canada's disparate cultures. "I just thought, well it's a birthday present for Canada, it kind of has to be inclusive," he says.

Canada 150 is an expansion of [Larabie](#)'s free typeface Mesmerize, a geometric font with sharp, pointed angles. Though it's not perfect, it does come with an interesting evolution. To expand the original typeface, Larabie studied the syllabic characters of the Cree language and other indigenous languages of what is now Canada. The written Cree language, created in 1840 by missionary James Evans, is marked by geometric glyphs, each of which stands for a syllable. Though distinct from their Latin counterparts, Larabie says most of the syllabic glyphs are a "Frankenstein-ing" the original Mesmerize typeface. Many of the syllabics look like a modified version of an M or U or C, with slightly wider apertures. "The triangular shapes have a lot to do with the A," he explains. Canada 150 is among a handful of typefaces to bridge multiple languages, which includes [Huronian](#), another multilingual typeface from [Rosetta Type Foundry](#) that blends Latin and Inuktitut symbols, the latter of which are derived from the Cree system.

David Březina, a principal designer at Rosetta, explains that creating a typeface for a multiple scripts requires a deep knowledge of every script you're designing for. "You need to know the conventions of all scripts involved and make them work together in a way that is not detrimental to any of them," he says. The key is to harmonize the different shapes, which requires a certain level of sensitivity, he adds. "This is particularly tricky as sometimes people tend to overdo it and impose conventions from one script to another

to get nicely looking system,” he says. “My personal opinion is to impose less and try to make the scripts look equal, equally important by default in the font.”

Canada 150 isn't the country's first semi-official typeface. In 1967, typographer Carl Dair released Cartier, the first Latin character typeface created in the country. The governor general commissioned Dair to design the typeface for the country's centennial celebration, and Dair worked on Cartier for 10 years before it launched. Even after a decade of work, the typeface still had weight and stroke inconsistencies, and so in the late 1990s, typographer Rod McDonald streamlined the original typeface making it more digital friendly.

Formally, Larabie's work is far from that of Dair and McDonald. If both are meant to reflect Canada, it's clear that they're speaking to two different generations. Then again, one typeface can hardly encompass a 3.8-million square-mile, culturally diverse country. Canada 150 is a blend of geometric and humanistic features. Or, as Larabie puts it: “It's pragmatic. It doesn't look tough and imposing.” Sounds like the Canada we know and love.

Direct Link: <http://www.wired.com/2015/12/canadas-new-typeface-unifies-the-countrys-many-languages/>

Tomson Highway's Wisdom

The First Nations playwright talks about women, God, music, and the joys of same-sex marriage.

By [Martin Morrow](#), December 10, 2015 at 12:00 pm



Playwright-composer Tomson Highway showcases his music with *Songs in the Key of Cree* at Hugh's Room this weekend. Photo by Sean Howard.

Tomson Highway: Songs in the Key of Cree

Hugh's Room ([2261 Dundas St. West](#))

Dec. 12 and 13

\$22.50 ([advance](#)), \$25 (door)

There's no disputing that Tomson Highway is Canada's best-known First Nations playwright. However, he might also be one of Canada's foremost feminist playwrights. Apart from one notable exception—the all-male *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing*—Highway's plays have been dominated by strong women, from *The Rez Sisters* and *Rose to Ernestine Shuswap Gets Her Trout* and, most recently, his [Juno Award-nominated](#) one-woman musical *The (Post) Mistress*.

“Are you telling me to stop it?” Highway says, laughing, when his preference for female characters is pointed out to him. He's on the phone from Saskatoon, where *The (Post) Mistress* recently played at Persephone Theatre. But he'll be in Toronto this weekend to showcase his tuneful side with a talent-packed variety show at [Hugh's Room](#) in Roncesvalles.

Dubbed *Songs in the Key of Cree*, the show features Highway—who is also a songwriter and classically trained pianist—performing his eclectic repertoire with guests including Micah Barnes, Patricia Cano, Teresa Castonguay, Laura Hubert, and Jani Lauzon. Marcus Ali will be blowing sax and [John Alcorn](#) is acting as musical director and co-keyboardist.

“I just adore him,” Highway says, at the mention of Alcorn's name. “If you need a headline for your piece, make it: ‘Tomson Highway Adores John Alcorn.’ I'm thrilled to be working with him again.”

Duly noted. But getting back to the women... Highway agrees writing about them has been a lifelong obsession; but it has nothing to do with modern social movements and everything to do with his ancestral beliefs. “Pantheism, which is the basis of native mythology and cosmology, sees God in nature,” he explains. “And the centre of native cosmology, certainly in Cree culture, is feminine. And so I write obsessively about that.”

For Highway, the root of our problems is monotheism, the belief in one God, particularly since that God is perceived to be male. “It's a patriarchal superstructure and it leads to fascism: ‘If you don't believe in my God, I'll kill you, I'll destroy you.’” When the monotheistic God came to the Americas with the European explorers, he arrived without a woman, Highway says. “Why did he come alone? Where was his wife? Where was his girlfriend? And the answer to the question is that *she was here all the time*. Our father art in heaven, but our mother is here on this planet. And if we don't recognize that, and that we need to preserve this planet, we're doomed. There will be no point having grandchildren. They'll have nothing to inherit but a scorched planet. Those forest fires you hear of in the north? They'll finally arrive in Toronto and burn the whole city down. That's the brutal truth.”

Somehow we've gone from talking women to talking climate change, but Highway—who turned 64 on December 6—is an elder with much wisdom to impart. He airs his thoughts regularly on the lecture circuit, where he'll talk about books, theatre, mythology, music, racial diversity, and multilingualism—the last the subject of [A Tale of Monstrous Extravagance](#), his 2014 Henry Kreisel Memorial Lecture for the Canadian Literature

Centre. He also has outspoken—and surprising—views on residential schools. Although he was among the first to write about the physical and sexual abuse endured by children in that system, in his semi-autobiographical 1998 novel *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, today he speaks of his own experience in a positive light. As he [told the *Globe and Mail*](#) in 2013: “[Because] of the residential system, by the time I was 12, I was trilingual. Because of the residential system, I learned how to play the piano and I play like a dream.”

Indeed, Highway has had a very fortunate life. Born in a tent in northern Manitoba in 1951, the eleventh child of a caribou hunter and a quilt-maker, he was taken from his family at age six and placed in the Guy Hill Indian Residential School, which he attended until he was 15. After completing his secondary education in Winnipeg, he ended up at the University of Western Ontario, studying music.



Tomson Highway at the piano. Photo courtesy of ClutchPR.

To this day, he thinks of himself primarily as a musician. “My first dream was to become a concert pianist,” he says. “But thank God I didn’t become one. I don’t like the lifestyle. You spend all your time between concert stages and hotel rooms. You can’t get married, you can’t have children. Or if you do, you’ll never see them. I remember Ofra Harnoy, the cellist, said she celebrated her birthday after a concert in Paris by going back to her hotel room and eating a chocolate bar. It’s a lonely life, it really is, and I like people too much. So I decided to make music with language instead.”

The concert hall’s loss was the theatre’s gain. When Highway took up playwriting in Toronto in the 1980s—after an eye-opening stint as a social worker—he brought the contemporary indigenous experience to Canada’s mainstages with plays that mixed raucous comedy and heartbreaking tragedy. His 1986 breakthrough hit *The Rez Sisters* ([revived in Toronto in 2011](#)) and its dark companion piece, *Dry Lips*, were landmark works that toured internationally and established his reputation. More notable achievements followed, including his first novel, *Fur Queen*, and *Pimootewin* (*The Journey*), the world’s first Cree-language opera. Already a member of the Order of Canada, he was recently honoured by the [Canadian Theatre Critics Association](#) with its Herbert Whittaker Award for his distinguished career.

Highway says it's nice to feel love from the critics. "I've been raked over the coals in the past," he notes good-naturedly, claiming that he once received a review that said "Tomson oughta move to Kapuskasing."

These days, life is sweet for Highway. No longer a Toronto resident, he now spends part of the year in Gatineau, Quebec, and the winters travelling abroad. After the holidays he'll be flying off to Rome to write—his latest project is an autobiography. One of the keys to his happiness is a long-term relationship: he and his partner, Raymond Lalonde, have been together for 30 years. "He's absolutely fantastic—the kindest man on the face of the Earth," Highway says. "I always say I get treated better than the Queen. When I look at all these heterosexual men who have gone through these tortured marriages, with the hatred, the cruelty, the alimony payments, it's like a battle zone. I thank God every day that I'm not heterosexual. I thank God for that privilege."

Direct Link: <http://torontoist.com/2015/12/tomson-highways-wisdom/>

Cree Nisga'a Clothing offers a modern take on traditional footwear

Sunday December 13, 2015



Linda Lavallee, of the Montreal Lake Cree Nation, is co-owner of Cree Nisga'a Clothing. (Duncan McCue/CBC)

A family business has modernized the traditional mukluk to create unique hand-painted boots that have heart as well as sole.

[Cree Nisga'a Clothing](#) is based on the Tzeachten First Nation in Chilliwack B.C., where a mother, father and son create custom made mukluk type boots.

They are made out of various hides including cow, bison and elk and painted with Nisga'a or Cree designs.

Linda Lavallee and Patrick Stewart are the owners and designers behind this fabulous footwear.

"I started when I was younger. I became pregnant at 18 and my dad said I had to learn a trade and that's what I learned, how to make mukluks," explained Lavallee.

"I just really wanted a pair, couldn't afford them so he said, 'well, learn.'"

Her mother taught her how to make them and at first, Lavallee was happy to make them for herself, friends and family. But she found that the wraparound style of the moccasin kept falling down. So she began experimenting with different construction styles.

"I wanted something to just stay in place so that's where we got our first concept of boots," recalled Lavallee.

'My very first pair, I think we just sold right off my feet. - *Linda Lavallee, creator and owner of Nisga'a Cree Clothing*

"People would just stop me and say, 'Where did you get your boots?' So we thought well, let's just try selling them."

The rest, they said, is a shoe success story.

Since that first pair, Cree Nisga'a has been selling custom built, hand painted designs to shoe lovers all over the world.



Brianna Nebeker wearing her custom Cree Nisga'a boots. (Karla Nebeker)

They have made boots for celebrities like Michelle Thrush and even for a young girl named Brianna Nebeker who presented a particular challenge.

"This young girl, she was born with a deformity and both feet were amputated," Stewart said.

Nebeker's parents had seen the company's boots and got in touch with them. Stewart said they made a custom pair with just the upper part of the boot, a cap on the bottom and lined them with sheepskin.

When the young client received her order, she was overwhelmed. "She just cried," said Lavallee. "The artwork we did was from her home community."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved/the-connection-between-traditional-fashion-cultural-footwear-and-modern-identity-1.3359711/cree-nisga-a-clothing-offers-a-modern-take-on-traditional-footwear-1.3361257>

Indigenous movies may never have a big audience, but director likes it that way

[Kerry Benjoe, Regina Leader-Post](#)

Published on: December 12, 2015 | Last Updated: December 12, 2015 12:05 PM CST



Indigenous films are to be on the big screen at Rainbow Cinemas in Regina. Windsor Star

It may not pay well, it may not be stable, it may not be big, but the indigenous film industry does have its niche.

Over the weekend, moviegoers will have a chance to see a small sample of indigenous films making the rounds at film festivals around the world.

Blackhorse Lowe, an indigenous filmmaker from the Navajo Nation, who lives in Albuquerque, N.M., is screening his second feature-length film, *Chasing Light*, at Rainbow Cinemas on Saturday.

director likes it that wayLowe was in Regina with *Chasing Light* actor Cody Lightning as part of Mispon: A Celebration of Indigenous Filmmaking event. His film and *Unnuap Taarnerpaafianni* (*When Darkness Comes*), an indigenous horror film from Greenland, will air on the big screen.

He described his film as a story of broken hearts and drug deals gone wrong.

Originally, it was to be a short film about a runner with a broken heart but through collaboration from other indigenous artists it slowly grew into a feature-length film.

Lowe insisted that although it was created by indigenous artists, the film is not indigenous but rather it's a story about humans that is both dramatic with some comedic elements.

He has been in the industry for the past 10 years and although the times have changed, other things have not.

"There are a lot of filmmakers out there," he said. "It's just that we don't have the numbers to get into theatres or we are not commercially viable for white people to come out and watch us, I guess."

He doesn't believe there will be a time when indigenous filmmakers become big box-office draws.

As an indigenous filmmaker, Lowe doesn't mind it because he is able to create the kinds of stories he wants to create.

"It would be nice to make a film that makes money," said Lowe, adding money is not what drives him.

He said it's the art that attracted him to the industry and it's being able to feed his artistic side, which keeps him in the business.

Because it is a relatively small industry, Lowe said it's a close-knit community and everyone knows everyone.

Lightning's appearance in Lowe's film happened all by chance.

He was in Albuquerque for a couple days and ran into Lowe, who is an old friend. The two got to talking and Lowe asked him to be part of the project.

Lightning said being able to adapt is one of the best things about being an actor.

Although it's not an industry where a lot of money is made, he said it's a place with great people who are passionate about their craft and he's happy to support indigenous filmmakers when the opportunity arises.

Trudy Stewart, Mispon festival director, invited Lowe to Regina to screen his movie because she thought his movie was funny, honest and unpredictable.

She met Lowe at the imagineNative Film Festival in Toronto last month where he was representing four different films.

"His films have gone to Sundance and Tribeca and festivals around the world," said Stewart. "I felt he had a lot to offer the emerging indigenous talent in Regina."

Direct Link: <http://leaderpost.com/entertainment/local-arts/indigenous-movies-may-never-have-a-big-audience-but-director-likes-it-that-way>

Nunavut woman keeps Inuit traditions alive in Winnipeg



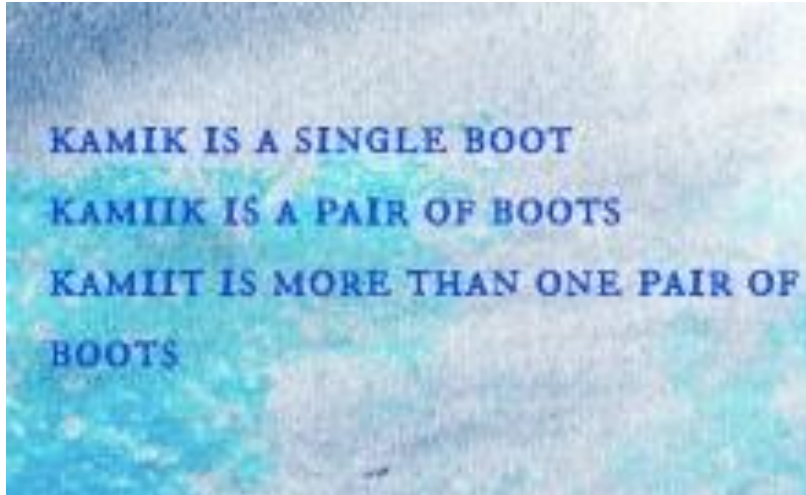
Sunday December 13, 2015

In the middle of Winnipeg, Annie Bowkett keeps her Inuit traditions alive.

She makes everything from sealskin parkas to mitts to kamiit. Kamiit are sealskin boots — a traditional footwear of the Inuit and similar to mukluks. Bowkett has shipped her handmade work to customers as far away as Tokyo.

The kamik Bowkett is working on is made from caribou legs. She says it takes two caribou — or eight legs — to make one pair of kamiik because the animal's legs are very skinny.

"They keep our whole body warm," Bowkett said.



An explanation of the different words for Inuit footwear. (CBC)

Originally from Pangnirtung, Nunavut, Bowkett moved to Winnipeg seven years ago. Her workshop, which she refers to as a "shack," is an extension of the garage of her home.

Inside the warmly lit workshop ulus, traditional cutting tools, hang on key holders. A quilliq, a traditional seal blubber oil lamp, burns, casting heat throughout the room while a bed on the floor lines one wall.

Bowkett said being in her shack reminds her of being out on the land. She often works into the wee hours of the morning sewing and chewing the caribou skins to make kamiit.

"We Inuit are always chewing. Chew, chew, chew," Bowkett said, smiling. The chewing is what makes the caribou skin wider and longer.



Bowkett wasn't always this close to her traditions. When she was growing up in Nunavut, Bowkett lost her connection to her mother and their traditional way of life because she was sent off to school.

"By the time I went back to my family, I started to get interested in what my mother was doing," Bowkett recalled. She also learned a few things from mother's sisters as well.

"I had beautiful aunties who were very traditional. They were very strict on me, if I really wanted to learn I had to respect them and accept them," she said..

"I used to cry going home because it was too hard. But then after a few years later, I started to enjoy it and that's how I found it again."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved/the-connection-between-traditional-fashion-cultural-footwear-and-modern-identity-1.3359711/nunavut-woman-keeps-inuit-traditions-alive-in-winnipeg-1.3361156>

Art group shows off Indigenous adult colouring book

By [Sean Leslie](#) Reporter Global News, December 13, 2015 4:14 pm



An Indigenous art group has created an adult colouring book. December 13, 2015.

WINNIPEG — An Indigenous adult colouring book was one of the items on display at an art show held by the abORIGINAL Student Co-op Project.

The event was put on by the Manitoba Cooperative Association, SEE Winnipeg and Children of the Earth High School.

"It's our understanding that we are the first, at least in Canada, to have student aboriginal art work in a colouring book," said Jackie Dolynchuk, community support worker with Children of the Earth school,

Other items like framed paintings and holiday cards were being sold in addition to the colouring book called 'Colour Me Serene/Ni-sisopekewin Kamwatan.'

The show is an opportunity for students to display their art and also, potentially to have it sold.

“That’s a really exciting part for the students and I think it makes them work a little harder on developing their concepts in the classroom and thinking more about their final product,” said art teacher Cindy Flett.

Direct Link: <http://globalnews.ca/news/2398616/art-group-shows-off-indigenous-adult-colouring-book/>

Aboriginal artist inspires LCSD students

By [Celina Ip](#), Monday, December 14, 2015 1:02:02 MST PM



Juno Award-winning singer Susan Aglukark speaks to students in Bonnyville on December 7 at the C2 Centre.

Hundreds filed into the Bonnyville Centennial Centre on Dec. 7 to enjoy a dose of motivation and music from Juno Award-winning artist Susan Aglukark.

Aglukark is an Aboriginal artist and motivational speaker who was named Arctic Canada’s first ever Juno Award-winning Inuk singer/songwriter. Since her first album was released in 1993, Aglukark has added put out five more albums, won three Juno awards and received The Order of Canada in 2005.

Over the past 20 years, Aglukark has performed for world dignitaries including Her Royal Highness Queen Elizabeth, Jean Chretien, Brian Mulroney and Nelson Mandela.

The Lakeland Catholic School District was honoured to host Aglukark for two sessions at the Bonnyville Centennial Centre on Dec. 7.

Aglukark performed a morning session for Grades 2 to 6 and an afternoon session for Grades 7 to 12. All LCSD schools were in attendance along with Elizabeth Métis Settlement as well as members of Cold Lake First Nations and Kehewin Cree Nation.

Aglukark entertained her audiences with a few solo performances of her hit songs that she interspersed with motivational dialogue in which she touched upon her music career, her culture and Aboriginal heritage.

“I want them to leave understanding and appreciating a little bit more about Inuit people,” Aglukark said.

“When it comes to me in this career, 20 years ago I had a big learning gap and I had a lot of figuring out to do to make this mine. That is a fairly common story when you come from an isolated community or reserve or small town Nunavut. There’s a lot of learning and catching up to do.”

Aglukark welcomed many questions from the students in the crowd.

Questions ranged from what inspired her to become a singer and what have been her favourite career moments so far.

“I’m an accidental artist. It’s not like I woke up on one day and I wanted to be a star or be an artist,” she said. “I was very lucky that I was able to do it for as long as I did and still love what I do.”

“I would say the best experience and the best memory I’ve had so far is meeting Nelson Mandela.”

Aglukark concluded her session by asking members of the audience to get up and take part in a traditional Cree round dance. Hundreds joined hands in a circle and danced around as Aglukark sang.

“The turnout was amazing so I think we were successful. And we had a very good little ram dance there for a bunch (who) had never even heard of it,” said Aglukark.

Aglukark wanted to leave her audience with an inspirational message to motivate them to keep pursuing their dreams.

“If it’s something you know in your heart you love, don’t give up,” said Aglukark. “It’s not easy at all, but if you love it you’ll find ways to keep it going.”

Direct Link: <http://www.coldlakesun.com/2015/12/14/aboriginal-artist-inspires-lcsd-students>

Canada's new national font was designed to include aboriginal languages

Anne Quito

December 16, 2015

Fluency

For the first time in its history, Canada has created a new “unified typeface” to represent not only its two official languages (French and English) but also its aboriginal languages. When the organizers of Canada's upcoming 150th anniversary celebrations (in 2017) were looking for a font to use, they first checked the internet for a free solution. They found “Mesmerize,” a font designed by Canadian type designer Raymond Larabie. It wasn't custom, but Larabie made it special—after being contacted by the government, the 45-year-old Ottawa native decided to update his angular sans serif type to be a little more inclusive.

1

Larabie added the typographic nuances of Canadian aboriginal languages like Cree, Inuktitut and Ojibway. “I'd brought up the idea with them to cover Canada's first nations languages. They said they would have to discuss it and, y'know... I got the feeling bureaucracy was approaching,” Larabie tells Quartz. “So I just went ahead spent the next month adding all the first nations languages I could come up with.”

1

“It's a chance to contribute to the 150-year development of Canada's very own visual identity,” he wrote in a statement.

Larabie's enhanced typeface, renamed “Canada 150,” is available in two weights, regular and light (notably, no bold or italics).

Here's what the complete family looks like:

[illegible]

To get a further insight into Canadian Aboriginal Syllabics, Larabie studied pictures of handwriting samples and painted signs. He observed that the accents above letterforms are typically misplaced in most digital typefaces. “There are some aspects of the Latin alphabet that shouldn’t be imposed on other writing systems,” he says. In the Latin alphabet, the letters E,L,T,Z are aligned horizontally, for example. In aboriginal languages, they’re aligned to the center. “I ran into the same problem with

katakana writing in Japan: letting go of the idea of horizontal alignment...it's hard to let go of something so ingrained in the Latin alphabet," says Larabie, a former art director for video games who currently lives in Nagoya, Japan. Larabie now runs the type foundry Typodermic Fonts. (The logo for the game Grand Theft Auto uses one of his free novelty fonts.)



Announced on Dec 7, 2015, Larabie's Canada 150 font will now be used by government agencies, but not without some controversy. The Canadian government, who has earmarked \$210 million (approximately €140 million) for its sesquicentennial in 2017, paid Larabie zero dollars for his work. "They didn't offer but I didn't ask," Larabie says. That, with the creation of the nation's new Canada 150 logo, designed by a 19-year-old student who was compensated \$5,000 for the winning design, has raised eyebrows in the design industry. Many criticized the pre-Justin Trudeau administration under Stephen Harper, for requesting free spec work through the student competition and for excluding professional graphic designers from what is arguably the nation's most new important branding project.

Direct Link: <http://qz.com/574312/canadas-official-new-united-font-was-designed-to-include-aboriginal-languages/>

The Envelope Please! Indigenous Comics Collection Moonshot Among Best Books of 2015

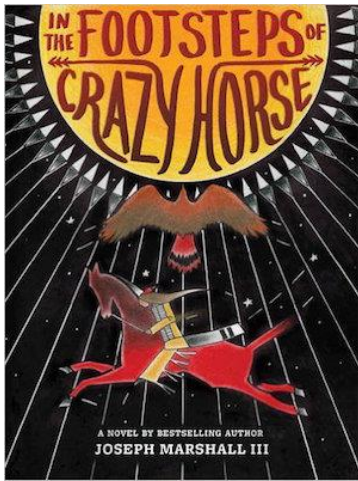
Stephanie Woodard

12/16/15

The stereotype-smashing graphic novel *Moonshot: The Indigenous Comics Collection* (AH Comics, 2015) has been anointed, taking its place on the *School Library Journal's* prestigious Best Books [list](#) for 2015.

It was chosen for its ability not just to entertain, but also enlighten.

“*Moonshot* is a wonderful teaching tool,” said Pamela Vanderberg, Métis, Native Studies teacher at East Northumberland Secondary School, in Brighton, Ontario. “We need more up-to-date resources like this.”



In the Footsteps of Crazy Horse, by Joseph Marshall III, is another indigenous work that made SLJ's 2015 list of best books. (Photo: Courtesy School Library Journal)

School Library Journal is the world's largest reviewer of children's and young adult books, and when it speaks, schools and libraries pay attention. The publication has been eager to include books with indigenous authors and subject matter in its reviews and lists, according to editor Shelley Diaz. As such, the journal features [articles](#) on Native books by Nambe Pueblo scholar and critic [Debbie Reese](#), among others. [*In the Footsteps of Crazy Horse*](#) (Abrams/Amulet, 2015) by Joseph Marshall III also made the list.

After Diaz learned about *Moonshot* on social media, she contacted AH Comics, a small Toronto publisher, for a review copy. However, when she and other SLJ reviewers decided *Moonshot* was one of 2015's best books, it was more than a nod to the usual definition of diversity, Diaz said.

“The book is so refreshing,” she said. “It shows us the diversity of the many Native tribal cultures, and it has an exceptionally diverse range of storytelling styles.”

Not only that, but also “the stories and the art—starting with the cover—are so arresting,” Diaz added.

Vanderberg's ninth-grade students find it as inspiring as Diaz does.

“You need skill to put your imagination to work, and *Moonshot*'s writers and artists have that,” said Zach, who is Anishinaabe and plans to become a videogame designer.

Reading *Moonshot* has inspired Devon, who is Tuscarora and writes and illustrates her own comics, to put more detail into her drawing.

Liam, whose family is Algonquin, wants to be a teacher and said he would use *Moonshot* in his curriculum. He liked its inclusion of origin stories from a range of Native cultures and suggested that graphic novels be created for additional population groups.

“It’s a great way to introduce children to culture,” he said. For a dose of cultural diversity of a different sort, AH Comics offers a similar book with [Jewish stories](#). *Moonshot*’s content is nuanced and avoids stereotypes, according to the students.

“It doesn’t portray us as savages,” said Zach, who noted that, importantly, segments include accurate language and cultural details for each featured community.

“*Moonshot* goes deep,” said Devon. “It’s the real stories, uncovered.” That’s just what AH Comics president Andy Stanleigh was after when he put together an all-indigenous writing team, along with a mix of Native and non-Native artists, to create *Moonshot*.

“Some of the stories have never been told outside their communities,” Stanleigh said. “We sought permission of elders and cultural leaders in order to include them.”

Stanleigh chose the book’s editor, Hope Nicholson, because of her experience editing indigenous material, including the re-issue of [Nelvana of the Northern Lights](#) (CGA Comics/IDW Publishing, 2014), a comic book featuring an Inuit super-heroine of the 1940s. Nelvana, who pre-dated Wonder Woman, protected Canada during World War II with powers including flight, telepathy, invisibility and shape shifting. Kelly Friesen has placed *Moonshot* on the classroom bookshelf for her Native Studies program at Gordon Bell High School, in Winnipeg. It has proven so popular that the school purchased additional copies for other classes and the library.

“It should be in every school library,” said Friesen, who heads the school’s humanities department.

Friesen’s school, like Vanderberg’s, has a large proportion of Native students. The exact number is not known in either case, because students self-identify, and history offers them plenty of indications that asserting Native ancestry might be buying trouble. *Moonshot* helps erase the stigma, according to Vanderberg.

“Presenting aboriginal culture and superheroes changes the paradigm,” she said.

Though *Moonshot* is aimed at teens, it is suitable for students of widely varying ages and reading levels, said Vanderberg. In the weeks ahead, her ninth graders will be reading the book to fourth graders.

“We need more books like this,” said Friesen. “I’m waiting for *Moonshot II*.”

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/12/16/envelope-please-indigenous-comics-collection-moonshot-among-10-best-books-2015-162790>

Cold Dream: Drawings by Qavavau Manumie explores the mystical and the prosaic

by [Robin Laurence](#) on December 16th, 2015 at 4:54 PM

At Marion Scott Gallery until January 9



Untitled (little person with large blade and kelp), 2007. QAVAVAU MANUMIE

Qavavau Manumie's drawings encompass the abstract and the representational, the mystical and the prosaic. His images speak of fantastical creatures, supernatural encounters, and the closely observed particulars of daily life in the Far North. Delicately and meticulously rendered in coloured pencil, graphite, and ink, his subjects include landscapes, seascapes, people, tools, transport, camp scenes, and creatures of the land, sea, and air. At the same time, this Cape Dorset artist may fragment and recombine aspects of all these subjects in ways that, to southern audiences, look quite surreal. In an untitled work of 2008, for instance, human and animal heads in profile are pressed against the wobbly and abstracted blades of an airplane propeller. Bubbles drift upward across the kaleidoscopic image, as if we were viewing a weird conjoining of the organic and the mechanical from an underwater chamber.

The dreamlike disjunctions in Manumie's art may perhaps be linked to the disruptions of his early life—or perhaps more simply and directly to the hybrid nature of contemporary Inuit existence, with its melding of the traditional and the modern, the familiar and the strange. Manumie was born in 1958, not in his home community but in Brandon, Manitoba, where his mother was being treated for tuberculosis. He spent his early years with a foster family in Brandon before moving, at the age of five or six, to Cape Dorset with his mother. As a young man, Manumie became an immensely accomplished printer for the Kinngait Studios, translating other artists' drawings into stonecuts. He also began to produce his own drawings, which have brought him considerable national acclaim and which align him with a third generation of Inuit artists whose works cannot be fixed within stereotypes of form or subject. Still, his drawings reveal his great familiarity with and understanding of Arctic wildlife.

Manumie's compositions also evince the attention he has paid to recent western art history and popular culture. His drawings are untitled and he is reportedly reluctant to discuss his work. However, by gentle questioning of the artist, through a translator, Marion Scott Gallery's Robert Kardosh has been able to glean some insights into his imagery. (See Kardosh's short essay, available in the gallery or [online](#).)

One of the recurring subjects in this show is the "little people" or *Inugagulligaq* who, according to the stories Manumie's father told him as a child, live among the Inuit, largely unseen. In a 2009 drawing, the diminutive beings, dressed in sealskin parkas, trousers, and boots, make their way through a zigzaggy maze that appears to be composed of metal panels riveted together. In another work, a little person bends forward under the weight of the enormous (i.e. human-size) knife he is carrying on his back, while dragging away a couple of equally enormous pieces of kelp with him.

Kelp blades and stipes, along with a smattering of stones, are also used as a framing device for a small landscape depicting a camp scene. As Kardosh notes, this picture within a picture is postmodernly self-reflective, addressing the "mediated nature of pictorial representation". The same kind of device is used in another, somewhat smaller scene of sea ice and ice floes, the small rectangle set within a much larger frame of organic and geometric abstractions, and lines scored with Xs. The whole is viewed through a screen of small circles, which might be snowflakes or might be bubbles again. As with so many other works here, the effect is surreal, sophisticated—and thoroughly engaging.

Direct Link: <http://www.straight.com/arts/600046/cold-dream-drawings-qavavau-manumie-explores-mystical-and-prosaic>

Inuit busker gets boost from Grammy-nominated aboriginal music collection

ADRIAN CHAMBERLAIN / TIMES COLONIST
DECEMBER 17, 2015 06:00 AM

A glimmer of Grammy glitter has helped reconnect a Nanaimo busker with his rich musical legacy.

Born in Aklavik, Northwest Territories, singer-songwriter Willie Thrasher is an Inuit musician whose father was a hunter and whaler in the western Arctic. A survivor of the residential school system, Thrasher has three songs included on the 2014 compilation album *Native North America Vol. 1: Aboriginal Folk, Rock and Country 1966-1985*.

The album's producer, Vancouver's Kevin Howes, just received a Grammy nomination for the collection. In turn, the international spotlight has led to new interest in Thrasher from music bookers.

“It’s really overwhelming. It’s exciting,” said Thrasher, who performs with his music (and life) partner Linda Saddleback at the Copper Owl on Friday.

“It took that many years for [my music] to be recognized. It kind of wakes up the spirit of the life that I had in the past, and the things I went through.”

For the past 20 years Thrasher, who’s in his late 60s, has lived in Nanaimo. A licensed busker, he regularly performs on the waterfront, accepting tips and selling his CDs to tourists. With help from Howes, he’s now accepting bookings such as a Northern Arts and Cultural Centre (NACC) tour of the Northwest Territories and a Montreal festival.

Howes encountered Thrasher’s music during a cross-country search for vinyl records featuring Canadian aboriginal music. “His songs are incredible. They touched my soul,” he said.

Native North America Vol. 1: Aboriginal Folk, Rock and Country 1966-1985 provides a glimpse into a wealth of music created by talented independent Canadian artists who, for various reasons, never found mainstream success. “We’ve heard the stories about the Guess Who and Anne Murray countless times. They’re great artists, but there’s a lot more to Canadian music than that,” Howes said.

In 1981, Thrasher released his debut record, *Spirit Child*, on CBC’s Northern Service. This disc has now been reissued by Seattle’s Light in the Attic Records, which also put out Native North America Vol. 1: Aboriginal Folk, Rock and Country 1966-1985.

Thrasher recalled being sent to a Catholic residential school when he was five years old. He remained in the residential school system until he was 16. Thrasher, who wasn’t allowed to speak his native language, was forced to reject his traditional culture.

“The residential school said our traditional ways — our drumming, singing and dancing — was the demons. It was the devil’s work. They showed us pictures of devils and horns and everything. Being five years old, of course you’d be scared looking at those kinds of pictures,” he said.

His outlet was playing a drum kit at the Inuvik school. Eventually he and other Inuit friends (including Thrasher’s brother) formed a rock band, the Cordells. Playing songs by the Rolling Stones, Creedence Clearwater Revival and Neil Young, the Cordells gigged at schools and community halls in the 1960s.

One evening, during a break, an elderly man approached Thrasher and his bandmates. It proved to be a turning point for the young musician.

“He really enjoyed our music. He sat down and talked to us about the music we do. He said, ‘Why don’t you write Inuvialuit music about your culture, your stories, your legends, how you lived here a long time?’ This old man seemed to know a lot more about our traditional ways than we did,” Thrasher said.

“He brought us back to who we really were at first, the Inuvialuit people. The way we used to live. It kind of woke me up.”

So Thrasher began writing original songs that reflected his heritage. “I was the only one who followed through and remembered what that old man had told us. And I never saw him again.”

As part of the NACC tour in February, Thrasher will visit his hometown of Inuvik for the first time in 40 years. He’s looking forward to visiting former members of the Cordells as well as other old friends and relatives. He comes from a large family — his father had 11 children with his first wife. When she died, he married her sister and had another 10.

“It’s going to be the trip of a lifetime to see my people again,” Thrasher said. “I’m really looking forward to it.”

achamberlain@timescolonist.com

What: Willie Thrasher and Linda Saddleback

Where: Copper Owl, 1900 Douglas St.

When: Friday, 9 p.m. (doors 8 p.m.)

Tickets: \$15 door (\$10 advance at eventbrite.ca)

- See more at: <http://www.timescolonist.com/inuit-busker-gets-boost-from-grammy-nominated-aboriginal-music-collection-1.2134926#sthash.65QuF4J3.dpuf>

Aboriginal Business & Finance

**Entrevestor: First Nations
entrepreneurship recognized**

CAROL MOREIRA ENTREVESTOR

Published December 10, 2015 - 3:32pm

Last Updated December 10, 2015 - 3:33pm

When former prime minister Paul Martin spoke at the Startup Canada awards in Toronto last week, he called for a national prize to recognize entrepreneurship among First Nations people.

Martin told the audience of business innovators that aboriginal people have a strong history of entrepreneurship, which is not always recognized by the wider population.

Gov. Gen. David Johnston recently hailed Cape Breton's Membertou First Nation as a community that has developed the leadership and innovation vital for success.

Eileen Paul, manager of the Membertou Entrepreneur Centre, is pleased by the high-profile praise.

"I think Paul Martin's idea is a good one," she said.

"Across the country, there is a lot of First Nations entrepreneurship, but it needs to be recognized and encouraged.

"First Nations people thrive as entrepreneurs, but I don't think we would even have recognized the word, we've been doing entrepreneurship so long."

Paul said entrepreneurship is especially strong in Membertou because Chief Terrance Paul and the council have made it a focus.

Many First Nations communities have economic development offices, but Paul believes Membertou is the only band in Atlantic Canada to have its own entrepreneurship centre.

The centre was started in 2005. The business plaza now includes a business incubator, which focuses on the rapid development of six ventures. Eight others work out of the entrepreneurship centre.

Paul has also spearheaded the development of a group for aboriginal women in business called Balance.

The entrepreneurship centre was started with the help of the Cape Breton YMCA. The group trained and mentored Paul, who until then had worked with high school students, to run the centre.

She has continued with her own studies and will soon complete her business degree.

The Membertou Entrepreneur Certificate Program offers participants seven courses in subjects such as business planning, bookkeeping and customer service.

Paul mentors entrepreneurs until they have formed their business plan, then sets them up with people who can help them with other aspects of business and financing.

“These include the Ulnooweg Development Group and Aboriginal Business Canada. Ulnooweg provides loans, while Aboriginal Business Canada offers grants.”

She said many of the businesses she assists are retail outlets and ventures that focus on traditional crafts. However, more modern ventures are coming.

“People are realizing they can do more. We are seeing people working in computers, catering, conferencing — things we never had before.”

Interest in entrepreneurship is growing, and Paul said about 10 per cent of Membertou’s population, which totals around 1,300, are business owners.

Business growth is enabled by the community’s location within Sydney, she said.

Clients include the local population and visitors, some of whom stay at the award-winning Hampton Inn developed by the community. The hotel abuts the Membertou Trade and Convention Centre and other businesses.

“We encourage entrepreneurship in schools through the E-Spirit Youth Entrepreneur Program, which is funded federally by the Business Development Corporation.”

Paul’s other community involvements include sitting on the executive board for Native Women of Nova Scotia. She has participated in the National Status of Women roundtable and received the Impact Award for Women in Business.

This year, her work with local women was profiled at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.

She said she is motivated by the success of the community.

“I love to see people becoming independent and self-sufficient. When people do well, it brings a sense of pride. When kids see the success of their parents, when standards of living rise, everyone becomes successful.”

Direct Link: <http://thechronicleherald.ca/business/1326897-entrevestor-first-nations-entrepreneurship-recognized>

Money in the bank for First Nation skateboard park

By Geordon Omand The Canadian Press, December 13, 2015 11:48 pm



Ahousaht First Nation boats patrol an area near where the whale watching boat Leviathan II sank near Tofino, British Columbia, Monday, Oct. 26, 2015.

VANCOUVER – A First Nations community on Vancouver Island whose [quick response to a capsized whale-watching boat](#) is credited with saving lives is one step closer to getting its own skateboard park.

Vancouver-based longboard design and production company Landyachtz has reached its goal of fundraising \$20,000 in order to build an outdoor skateboarding facility for at-risk youth in Ahousaht.

The isolated village, located on an island about 20 kilometres north of Tofino, has about two kilometres of paved road and is accessible only by air and water.

“We’re really excited about how well the fundraising campaign went,” said Landyachtz co-founder Mike Perreten in an interview on Sunday. “It feels great.”

Money-raising efforts began about two years ago after a Landyachtz crew visited Ahousaht to teach children how to skateboard.

“It was just so obvious right away that this community would benefit so much from a skateboard park here,” said Perreten.

The campaign took on new momentum in October after a giant wave [flipped the Leviathan II](#), a whale-watching vessel based out of Tofino, sending 27 passengers and crew into the frigid, roiling Pacific Ocean. Six people died in the incident.

Survivor Dwayne Mazeereuw wanted to find a way to give back to his rescuers after he and his wife were plucked from the chilly waters that day by an Ahousaht fishing crew.



A Calgary-based skateboard-park designer by trade, Mazeereuw discovered Landyachtz's campaign and decided to offer his expertise to the effort.

That design contribution, in addition to the \$20,000 publicly raised and the \$10,000 each coming from Landyachtz and the Ahousaht Council, means a higher-quality park than originally envisioned, said Perreten.

"We're getting way more than a \$40,000 park now, which is pretty cool," he said, adding that designing even a small skateboard park can cost as much as \$20,000.

"The whole thing has kind of taken on a life of its own. It's really awesome."

Because of the expansion, a new location will have to be found in the coming weeks, after which the design process can begin.

"The plan is to break ground in the spring so the park can be used for the end of the spring and the summer," said Perreten.

Direct Link: <http://globalnews.ca/news/2398952/money-in-the-bank-for-first-nation-skateboard-park/>

Canada Revenue Agency seeks back taxes from aboriginal employees

The Canada Revenue Agency has been aggressively collecting back taxes from a group of mostly low-income aboriginal women who worked for Native Leasing Services



Ramona Dunn stands in front of her home in Exeter, Ontario, December 9, 2015.

By: [Joanna Smith](#) Ottawa Bureau reporter, Published on Mon Dec 14 2015

OTTAWA—The [Canada Revenue Agency](#) has been aggressively collecting back taxes from a group of mostly low-income aboriginal women who lost a long-running legal battle to be exempt from paying personal income taxes because their employer was situated on a reserve.

Native Leasing Services, an employee outsourcing company that has its headquarters on Six Nations of the Grand River, a reserve near Brantford, Ont., is seeking a remission order from National Revenue Minister Diane LeBouthillier — who would have to recommend it to cabinet for approval — on behalf of 3,916 former employees.

“Most of the applicants live on or near the poverty line ... A large portion of these employees will never be able to pay the tax assessments that have been made against them,” Jim Fyshe, a lawyer working pro-bono for Native Leasing Services, wrote in the application for a remission order filed in June 2013.

The employees, whose annual income at Native Leasing Services averaged about \$27,000, according to Fyshe, are being pursued by collections officers who are putting liens on their homes, garnishing their wages and clawing back benefits for years of personal income taxes after the courts supported a decision by Canada Revenue Agency to reinterpret the Indian Act.

One of them is Ramona Dunn, 53, who the Canada Revenue Agency says owes nearly \$94,000 in taxes, fines and interest for the five years she worked as a registered nurse and diabetes educator at [Anishnawbe Health Toronto](#), where she was technically an employee of Native Leasing Services.

Dunn, who grew up in poverty — at one point living in a shack behind a gas station with her mother, a residential school survivor — said she took the job at the non-profit agency for a smaller salary than she would have earned at a hospital.

“I was willing to work for less money than my skill set would have given for me just for the chance of working in my community and helping my people,” Dunn says from her

home in Exeter, Ont., adding the tax exemption, which she still believes she has a right to as a status Indian, helped make up some of the difference in take-home pay.

Now Dunn, whose severe arthritis prevents her from working full time, has remortgaged her home and the Canada Revenue Agency threatens to put a lien on her property.

“Never in a million years would I have thought they would go after me,” says Dunn, who has started an online petition and wrote a letter to Lebouthillier about her case, receiving a pro-forma response on Nov. 24 assuring her officials would review her issues.

Philippe Brideau, a spokesman for the Canada Revenue Agency, said they could not comment on individual cases due to privacy reasons, but said remission orders are considered on a case-by-case basis.

“Each request is carefully reviewed by the CRA to determine if the collection of a tax or enforcement of a penalty is unreasonable or unjust or if it is in the public interest to grant remission,” wrote Brideau, who did not make Lebouthillier available for an interview.

“The filing of a request for remission does not create a suspension of collection action for a tax debt. The CRA makes every effort to reach a mutually acceptable payment arrangement based on the taxpayer’s ability to pay before proceeding with any collection actions,” Brideau wrote.

Native Leasing Services, part of the O.I. Group of companies, was set up in the 1980s by First Nations activist Roger Obonsawin and his partner, Ljuba Irwin, as a way for First Nations people and non-profit organizations serving the aboriginal population to exercise their right to be exempt from income taxes under section 87 of the Indian Act.

Native Leasing Services would hire the workers as a centralized agency — taking care of payroll and other administrative tasks — but the work would actually be done for the clients based off-reserve.

The Canada Revenue Agency later changed its guidelines and entered into an agreement with Native Leasing Services to clarify them through a series of test cases in court.

Irwin says Native Leasing Services was under the impression that should they lose what ended up being a long and protracted legal battle, the past debts would be forgiven.

That ended up not being the case.

January 25, 1983 — Nowegijick v. The Queen

The Supreme Court of Canada rules that Eugene Nowegijick, a member of Gull Bay Indian Band in northwestern Ontario, has the right as a status Indian to be exempt from paying taxes on his personal income under section 87 of the Indian Act because his

employer, the Gull Bay Development Corp., was situated on the reserve, even though he performed his duties as a logger off the reserve.

1987 — Native Leasing Services

Roger Obonsawin and Ljuba Irwin create O.I. Employees Leasing Inc. — Native Leasing Services and set up its head office on the Six Nations of the Grand River, a reserve near Brantford, Ont. This allows its employees, who work mainly at aboriginal non-profit organizations off reserves, to be exempt from paying income taxes.

April 16, 1992 — Williams v. Canada

The Supreme Court of Canada ruled that Glen Williams, a member of the Penticton Indian Band, did not need to pay taxes on his employment insurance benefits for work done on a reserve even though the benefits themselves did not come from the reserve. The court established “connecting factors” to define eligibility for tax exemption under section 87 of the Indian Act.

Political protests

The Canada Revenue Agency, then known as Revenue Canada, interpreted the ruling to mean employees of Native Leasing Services, working off-reserve, must pay income taxes. These new guidelines would come into effect Jan. 1, 1995, which set off a political battle — especially as then prime minister Jean Chrétien broke a promise he made while in opposition the year before — culminating with Obonsawin and other indigenous activists occupying fifth floor of a Revenue Canada building in downtown Toronto in December 1994.

December 23, 1994 — A compromise

The deputy minister at Revenue Canada, Pierre Gravel, writes a letter to Irwin saying the agency would “take all available steps to expedite consideration by the courts of any challenge of the guidelines or their application in particular circumstances” in exchange for vacating the fifth-floor of its office building. This led to Native Leasing Services and Revenue Canada selecting four “test cases” to clarify the law and establish legal precedent.

April 12, 1996 — Collections on hold

Revenue Canada tells Native Leasing Services that it would assess all income earned by its employees after Jan. 1, 1995, as taxable, but should any employees file notices of objection, it would hold them in abeyance while the test cases — Shilling, Clarke, Horn and Williams — made their way through the courts.

June 9, 1999 — Shilling v. MNR

After years of procedural back-and-forth, the lead test case involving Rachel Shilling, a member of Rama First Nation near Orillia, Ont., who worked for Anishnawbe Health Toronto through a contract with Native Leasing Services, goes to trial. Federal Court Trial Division Judge Karen Sharlow rules in her favour, essentially reverting back to the common-law principle supported by the Supreme Court in 1983.

Subsequent losses

Internal Revenue Canada documents released through the courts show the federal government was concerned about the impact of this victory for Native Leasing Services would have, especially as it would make it harder to secure modern treaties in exchange for relinquishing the Indian Act tax exemption. The government appealed Shilling and won, with the Supreme Court of Canada refusing to grant Native Leasing Services leave to appeal on March 14, 2002.

June 2013 — Remission order

As its former employees have been losing individual appeals and being told they owe thousands of dollars in back taxes, Native Leasing Services submitted a request for a remission order to the Canada Revenue Agency on behalf of 3,916 employees seeking relief. It is also seeking leave to appeal to the Supreme Court on one of the cases that was dismissed by the Federal Court of Appeal last month.

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2015/12/14/canada-revenue-agency-seeks-back-taxes-from-aboriginal-employees.html>

Lotteries group scolded for VLT overpayments to First Nations

Auditor General Kim MacPherson reviews New Brunswick Lotteries and Gaming Corporation operations

CBC News Posted: Dec 15, 2015 12:54 PM AT Last Updated: Dec 15, 2015 12:55 PM AT



Kim MacPherson, auditor general, says her 2013 fiscal audit revealed there were more than 300 unauthorized VLTs operating in New Brunswick. (CBC)

Auditor General Kim MacPherson is critical of the New Brunswick Lotteries and Gaming Corporation for knowingly allowing overpayment errors to First Nations to continue, and for its questionable decision to participate in Atlantic Lottery Corporation's Geonomics investment.

In her report presented to a legislature committee on Tuesday, MacPherson said between 2002 and 2015, the gaming corporation overpaid seven First Nations \$14 million due to an error in calculating net profits from video lottery terminals.



Auditor General Kim MacPherson released her latest report to the legislature on Tuesday. (CBC)

MacPherson also noted the errors were discovered in 2013 and she said "disappointingly, have not been corrected as of October 2015.

"[The corporation] is knowingly continuing the overpayments at the rate of \$172,000 per month," said MacPherson. "In my opinion, NBLGC should discontinue making unauthorized overpayments to First Nations immediately."

MacPherson also was concerned that her 2013 fiscal audit revealed there were more than 300 unauthorized VLTs operating in New Brunswick.

"This represents a potential reduction of revenue available to the province's consolidated fund to finance programs such as education and health care," she said.

New Brunswick lost approximately \$4.3 million through participating in the lottery corporation's investment in a British-based online lottery called Geosweep.

MacPherson's recommendations include:

- Performing due diligence procedures for future investments similar to Geonomics.
- Discontinuing making unauthorized overpayments to First Nations immediately.
- Recovering the overpayments made to date.

- Monitoring and increasing compliance initiatives to reduce or eliminate unauthorized VLTs.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/lotteries-corporation-auditor-general-1.3365847>

John Ivison: First Nations spending promises could worsen fiscal crunch

JOHN IVISON | December 15, 2015 6:36 PM ET



THE CANADIAN PRESS/Adrian Wyld Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett (left) and Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada Jody Wilson-Raybould take part in the grand entrance as the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation commission is released, Tuesday December 15, 2015 in Ottawa.

The tabling of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report is a new beginning, rather than an ending, said the Justice Murray Sinclair, chair of the TRC. Let's hope he's right, but native leaders have been let down before.

The Liberal Party has a spotty track record in following through on its promises when it comes to First Nations policy.

That is not to say the Conservatives did better — they just didn't raise false hope by promising transformational change, as the Liberals did with their Red Book and the 1993 election platform.

Twenty-two years ago, the Chrétien Liberals said they would recognize the inherent right to native self-government in areas ranging from culture to language, from education to health.

They claimed that once in government they would support major reforms to land claims policy; establish a separate aboriginal justice system; introduce significant increases to

the education budget; bring in an exemption from the GST; and negotiate new fiscal arrangements.

“The aboriginal population is an overwhelmingly young population. If we do not focus on the potential of these young people, we will face increasing costs to our social security, healthcare and justice systems and we will have lost a generation able and willing to make a contribution,” said the party’s Red Book.

That, of course, is exactly what happened, after the Liberal government introduced a 2 per cent spending cap on native education. In short, they didn’t get it done.

“Jean Chrétien broke or ignored most of the Liberal promises,” said Russ Diabo, who was vice president of policy with the Liberal Aboriginal People’s Commission at the time. There are high hopes that this time will be different. Preparations for the inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women is already underway. There has been a commitment to remove the cap and make significant investments in native education. On Tuesday, Trudeau once again promised to implement all 94 TRC recommendations.

But while the fiscal pressures may not be what they were in the mid-1990s, the Trudeau Liberals are already conceding that containing the deficit to \$10 billion in each of the next three years is a goal, not a commitment. There is no more talk of a debt-to-GDP ratio of 27 per cent by the end of their mandate.

The Liberal platform promises incremental funding of \$275 million for indigenous peoples next year, which will likely prove a fraction of what is required to fulfill all those promises (they are fortunate the \$1 billion the Conservatives committed to native education remains ring-fenced in the fiscal framework).

At the same time, First Nations policy should be the litmus test for the Trudeau government in four years time. Canadians voted for change, and the living conditions of our aboriginal population is the area where change is most overdue. The Prime Minister has staked his reputation on ensuring that another generation of aboriginal Canadians is not lost.

“We need nothing less than a total renewal of the relationship between Canada and indigenous peoples ... I give you my word, we will renew and respect that relationship,” he said Tuesday, as he accepted the final report.

But he has a lengthy list of other commitments, not least of which is the one to return the budget to balance in time for the next election.

As my Postmedia colleague Andrew Potter noted in a perceptive article last month, the Harper government considered one of its greatest successes to be its reduction of Ottawa’s capacity to launch national social programs.

By reducing the GST by two points, Harper cost the federal treasury about \$12 billion a year and reduced spending as a portion of GDP to its lowest level in half a century. The goal, in the words of Grover Norquist, was to shrink government until it was “small enough to drown in a bathtub.”

Transformative change for First Nations is going to require more revenue and, during their years in opposition, the Liberals often mused on the source.

Back in 2007, then-leader Stéphane Dion suggested he might, if elected prime minister, increase the goods and services tax. The idea was repeated by his successor, Michael Ignatieff.

In 2010, John McCallum, the party's then-finance critic, pushed the idea of raising the GST back to 7 per cent. "It's an option. All I can say is that it's consistent with our approach," McCallum, now immigration minister, said at the time.

Just six months ago, it seemed likely the GST might be cut further — there were rumblings the Conservatives were keen to include another one-point cut in their election platform. That idea was nixed by Stephen Harper because it risked driving the budget back into deficit.

Now, all the signs point to a GST hike. I put the question to Bill Morneau after a Cabinet meeting Tuesday. "I'm not at this stage considering any tax issues that we haven't already put in our campaign platform," the new finance minister said.

Morneau emphasized that in a tweet Tuesday afternoon, saying the Liberals "are not considering changes to the GST."

However, the operative words may be "at this stage." This is a government that has a spending problem but thinks it has a revenue problem. Sooner, rather than later, it is going to have to find another source of cash flow, or the "new era of reconciliation" will turn into another false dawn.

Direct Link: <http://news.nationalpost.com/news/canada/canadian-politics/john-ivison-could-first-nations-spending-promises-mean-a-gst-hike>

First Nations, municipalities can work together and prosper

JASON WARICK, SASKATOON STARPHOENIX

Published on: December 17, 2015 | Last Updated: December 17, 2015 10:24 AM CST

Saskatchewan municipalities and First Nations can thrive if they work together.

That's the message from both groups at a Saskatoon conference targeting business and infrastructure partnerships.

"Municipalities are looking at opportunities, and so are First Nations. How can we build a better life? Our goals are similar, so it's imperative we work together," said Ron McCullough, chief administrative officer for the RM of Sherwood outside Regina.

Cooperation has improved and expanded exponentially in recent years, he said. Part of it is simple efficiency. If a town and a nearby First Nation each need a multi-million-dollar water treatment plant, “Why wouldn’t we cooperate on that?” McCullough said before his talk at the Prosperity through Partnerships conference Wednesday morning.



Ron McCullough



Robert Merasty

Thirty years ago, he was “dumb and ignorant,” McCullough said. Education and interaction with First Nations people is changing that.

Like many other municipalities, Sherwood is working with four First Nations on business development projects.

Brad Michael, policy analyst for the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, said the seeds planted years ago are starting to bear fruit.

In 1992, First Nations, the federal and provincial governments and others signed the Treaty Land Entitlement (TLE) framework. It has allowed 33 Saskatchewan First Nations to purchase more than a million acres of land to compensate for unmet treaty obligations. The framework was controversial in the early years, but all sides now see its benefits, Michael said.

The purchases are providing municipalities with revenue, as the service agreements are equal in value to the former taxation system. They also provide employment and economic development for First Nations.

“There was a learning curve. Trust had to be built,” Michael said. “The agreements are working.”

FSIN vice-chief Robert Merasty said he’s confident things will improve further under the new federal Liberal government. He said the economy and the quality of life for all Canadians will improve when First Nations are given a chance to reach their potential.

“It’s an opportune time to take a look at all of that,” he said. “First Nations are a part of the solution.”

Direct Link: <http://thestarphoenix.com/news/local-news/first-nations-municipalities-can-work-together-and-prosper>

First Nations groups sign agreement to foster economic development

Published on December 17, 2015

HALIFAX — Two provincial First Nations economic groups have inked a deal to work together on development initiatives of mutual interest.



alex paul

The Mi'kmaw Economic Benefits Office (MEBO), based in Membertou, and the New Brunswick Joint Economic Development Initiative (JEDI), based in Fredericton, have signed a memorandum of understanding to that will create a focus on building partnerships with large industry in the region.

In a press release announcing the agreement, both groups say that want to identify both employment and business opportunities for aboriginal people along with offering training and support to both individuals and aboriginal businesses.

“We are pleased to sign this important agreement with MEBO,” said Alex Dedam, president of JEDI.

“Our organizations have had a long relationship of working together for the betterment of aboriginal people in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. This memorandum of understanding will allow us to build on our great relationship.”

Alex Paul, executive director of MEBO, offered a similar comment.

“Over the last couple of years, we have been collaborating more and more on major projects like the Irving shipbuilding contract. We have seen the benefits of this collaboration and want to build upon this success of working together and sharing information,” said Paul.

The two groups share an interest in the identifying economic opportunities, development and delivery of economic development programs, training and supporting aboriginal clients.

The agreement also means that both parties will also collaborate and partner on communications and promotion of aboriginal economic development initiatives and opportunities.

Most importantly, both organizations will work together at creating a client referral process with appropriate tracking and credit acknowledgment.

The results of the new initiatives are to be reported on annually.

Through its training and support programs, MEBO has trained more than 1,000 individuals and helped create more than 500 jobs for local aboriginals.

The Membertou office services all five Cape Breton First Nations communities.

JEDI serves all 15 First Nation communities in New Brunswick as well as aboriginal people living outside their communities.

To date, the group has helped hundreds of aboriginal people find careers in information and communications technology, natural resources, energy and defence. JEDI has also helped foster new businesses such in retail, hospitality, tourism, information and communications technology as well as clean technology.

Direct Link: <http://www.capebretonpost.com/Business/2015-12-17/article-4379155/First-Nations-groups-sign-agreement-to-foster-economic-development/1>

Aboriginal Community Development

Optimistic about Aboriginal prosperity

Postmedia Network

First posted: Wednesday, December 09, 2015 06:26 PM EST | Updated: Wednesday, December 09, 2015 06:35 PM EST



Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde (R) adjusts a blanket presented to Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau during the Assembly of First Nations Special Chiefs Assembly in Gatineau, Canada, December 8, 2015. REUTERS/Chris Wattie

On Tuesday Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced his government will launch an inquiry into murdered and missing Aboriginal women.

This has been a political hot potato for years. Former prime minister Stephen Harper declined to launch an inquiry because, he explained, it was largely a policing matter.

Many Canadians thought the estimated \$40 million cost – sure to increase, as all such public expenses do – would be a waste, that it would be better spent on direct efforts to assist Aboriginal people in need.

But now that the inquiry is going ahead, it's important all Canadians make the best of it. What we want to see from it is an honest discussion about how to bring the many Aboriginal Canadians who live on the fringes of society into the mainstream economy.

People living on the fringes are more likely to be victims of violent crimes. Canada is a prosperous country and everyone should be sharing in that prosperity. Improving Aboriginal prosperity is one of the key ways to improving community safety.

There are many sad statistics to point to. As David Akin recently noted out, in the last decade 400 of the 618 First Nations communities have been under a boil water advisory. Over 150 of them have been under some form of third party management.

Major life indicators like alcoholism, suicide and life expectancy continue to be worse for First Nations people than the rest of the country.

However we're optimistic prosperity will increase and these numbers will go down.

While Aboriginal employment statistics continue to sit several percentage points below that of the broader population, education and self-employment is gaining.

According to a recent report by the Canadian Council of Aboriginal Businesses, there are over 35,000 Aboriginal businesses.

There's still an education gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians. But that gap is narrowing. Statistics Canada data from 2006 showed that while 22% of non-Aboriginal Canadians aged 25 to 54 had a college degree, 18% of First Nations people had one. The skilled Aboriginal workforce is growing.

It's too early to guess what will come of this inquiry. But we need to use every opportunity we can take to talk about improving Aboriginal prosperity. This is such an occasion.

Direct Link: <http://www.torontosun.com/2015/12/09/optimistic-about-aboriginal-prosperity>

Yukon moves to make National Aboriginal Day a holiday

MLAs vote unanimously for holiday, but allow for consultation first

[CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 10, 2015 12:52 PM CT Last Updated: Dec 10, 2015 12:52 PM CT



A traditional drum illustrates the importance of chinook salmon to Yukon First Nations' culture and subsistence. (Philippe Morin)

Yukon MLAs are all for another day off in the territory, but they'll first consult with Yukoners about making National Aboriginal Day a holiday.

The opposition NDP introduced a motion to make June 21 a statutory holiday. That would make Yukon only the second jurisdiction to do so, after the N.W.T.

"We can be leaders. We can signal to the rest of the country that it's time they also step up to the plate," said NDP MLA Kevin Barr in the legislature.



A statutory holiday on June 21 would 'recognize the contributions of Yukon's indigenous peoples, and support efforts at reconciliation,' said MLA Kevin Barr. (CBC)

"Making this day a stat holiday would recognize the contributions of Yukon's indigenous peoples, and support efforts at reconciliation and understanding between aboriginal and non-aboriginal people," he said.

Barr also said paid holidays make workers happy and "increase social and community bonds."

Don't plan your long weekend yet

MLAs voted unanimously in favour of the NDP motion, but not before amending it to allow for consultation.

Community Services Minister Currie Dixon says that will take time, so it's unlikely that Yukoners will celebrate another long weekend before 2017.

Still, Dixon says the government likes the idea.

"We are keenly and very enthusiastically supportive of finding new ways to recognize and support First Nations' culture heritage and language," Dixon said.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/yukon-national-aboriginal-day-holiday-1.3359157>

Nunavut Inuit honoured with Governor General's Meritorious Service Decorations

Iqaluit's Leena Tatiggaq Evic, Rebecca Veevee getting a cross and medal

[CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 11, 2015 1:01 PM CT Last Updated: Dec 11, 2015 3:35 PM CT



His Excellency presents the Meritorious Service Cross to Iqaluit's Leena Tatiggaq Evic for her work on preserving Inuit traditional knowledge and language. (Sgt Ronald Duchesne/Rideau Hall)

Two women from Nunavut are among the 43 Canadians receiving the Governor General's Meritorious Service Decorations today at Ottawa's Rideau Hall.

Iqaluit's Leena Tatiggaq Evic is one of five people awarded the Meritorious Service Cross and Iqaluit's Rebecca Veevee is receiving one of 38 Meritorious Service Medals.

Evic created the Pirurvik Centre for Inuit Language, Culture and Wellbeing, which offers courses in Inuktitut as well as educational resources and ongoing professional support. She also founded the Ingalangaittukuurvik, a doctoral program dedicated to preserving Inuit traditional knowledge and language.



His Excellency presents the Meritorious Service Medal to Rebecca Veevee for her work on promoting traditional Inuit foods. (Sgt Ronald Duchesne/Rideau Hall)

She is receiving the prestigious Meritorius Service Cross for her work to preserve the Inuit language, culture and identity.

Veevee, host and chef of the popular Inuit language TV cooking show Niqitsiat, which means healthy cooking in Inuktitut, has received a Meritorious Service Medal for her work on promoting traditional Inuit foods. Her program has been recognized for combating a growing epidemic of diseases related to poor nutrition in northern communities.

"On behalf of my colleagues at the Legislative Assembly and all Nunavummiut, I want to congratulate Leena Tatiggaq Evic and Rebecca Veevee," said premier Peter Taptuna.

"We're extremely proud that they are recognized for promoting Inuit traditional knowledge, language and nutritious northern foods," added Taptuna.

The Meritorious Service Decorations' civil division was created to recognize individuals who have performed an exceptional deed or activity that has brought honour to their community or to Canada. There are two levels: a cross and a medal.

The cross was originally created in 1984, for members of the military. In 1991, a medal was added to the military division, and both the cross and medal were introduced for civilians.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/nunavut-inuit-honoured-with-governor-general-s-meritorious-service-decorations-1.3360910>

Peter Murdoch, 86, an "ally and servant of Nunavik," dies Dec. 9

"Rest in peace, our Ilannaaq Peter"

NUNATSIAQ NEWS, December 11, 2015 - 7:00 am



Peter Murdoch, with some young friends during his earlier days in the eastern Arctic. (PHOTO COURTESY OF ILAGIISAQ)



Peter Murdoch and his wife Lucille in Puvirnituq, in a photo taken in July 1957. Known in Nunavik as "Pitaaluk," Murdoch was a founder of the co-op movement in Nunavik and served as general manager of the FCNQ between 1967 and 1997. (FILE PHOTO)



Peter Murdoch inside the FCNQ carving showroom in Baie d'Urfé, on the West Island of Montreal, in 1992. (PHOTO BY JANE GEORGE)



Peter Murdoch earlier this year, wearing his Order of Canada medal. Murdoch was named to the Order of Canada on Dec. 26, 2014. (PHOTO COURTESY OF ILAGIISAQ)

(Corrected Dec. 11, 1:00 p.m.)

Peter Murdoch, a dear and admired friend to many in the eastern Arctic, died Dec. 9 at his home on Montreal's West Island, leaving behind him an unbroken legacy of service that dates to the late 1940s.

Ilagiisag, the Fédération des Co-opératives du Nouveau-Québec, where Murdoch worked for 30 years, described Murdoch as an “ally and servant” of the Inuit of Nunavik in a statement released Dec. 10.

“The Ilagiisag bids adieux to one of the greatest friends it has ever known,” Ilagiisag said.

Murdoch, born Sept. 29, 1929 in St. John's, Nfld., first made his way to the eastern Arctic in 1947, where he worked as a clerk and manager for the Hudson's Bay Co.

His work with the HBC took him to Kimmirut, Pangnirtung, Cape Dorset, Kuujjuaq, Kangiqsualujjuaq, Kangirsuk, Clyde River, Pond Inlet and Puvirnituk, then known as Povungnituk, where he arrived with his wife, Lucille, in 1955.

It was on Baffin Island that Murdoch learned to speak the Inuit language and learned how to appreciate the Inuit way of life.

“I enjoyed hunting a lot, going out with people, seeing the way they lived, visiting in tents, learning the language. I never tried to learn it. If someone told me something, I just remembered it,” [Murdoch told Nunatsiq News journalist Jane George in 1991.](#)

“When things were tough, no one complained. You accepted your life as it came and I felt then that we could have learned a lot from the Inuit and the ways they relate to each other,” Murdoch said.

In 1958, the federal government hired Murdoch to look at low-cost housing solutions for Inuit and to help with the creation of the new community of Rankin Inlet.

Also in 1958, Murdoch and Father André Steinmann started a sculptor’s association in Puvirnituq that in 1960 became a co-operative: a small seed, which, over time, grew into today’s Ilagiisaq, or FCNQ, with stores and hotels throughout Nunavik.

Murdoch also worked for a time in Apex at the Apex Rehabilitation Centre.

And, between 1964 and 1966, he lived in Yellowknife as regional administrator for the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

In 1966, Murdoch also collaborated with the late Farley Mowat in northern Quebec, Baffin Island and the western Arctic on a series of CBC Northern Service radio broadcasts.

“It was during this trip that the directors of the Puvirnituq Co-operative Association, and Alasie Alasuak, and Father André Steinmann asked Peter to help them set up a co-operative federation for the then existing co-operatives of northern Quebec,” Ilagiisaq said in its release.

From 1967 until his retirement in 1997, Murdoch served as general manager of the co-operative federation that came to be known as the FCNQ, or Ilagiisaq.

During that period, he and Lucille helped develop Inuit language terminology for business transactions so that co-op directors and managers with no formal education could run their operations.

Murdoch also developed the FCNQ’s mission statement: “working together to develop as a people, leaving none behind.”

“Those he worked with at the FCNQ regarded Peter as friend, mentor, confidante, advisor and father figure. He taught Inuktitut to many and his person-to-person style endeared him to his colleagues,” Ilagiisaq said.

Murdoch is survived by Lucille Murdoch, their children and grandchildren.

“We share our sadness with those he touched and console ourselves in the knowledge that Peter leaves behind a family united, a thriving Federation and the people stronger for having grown with him,” Lucille Murdoch said in a statement.

In 2003, Murdoch received the Ordre du Mérite from the Conseil québécois de la co-opération et de la mutualité.

And in December 2014, [Murdoch was named to the Order of Canada.](#)

Aliva Tulugak, the president of Ilagiisak, praised Murdoch for bettering the lives of Nunavik Inuit.

“It was first in Kimmirut that he learned of the Inuit, their values and philosophy. He said he had not had a teacher in life, but the Inuit showed him how they loved their fellow Inuit, so when Tommy Manning’s mother made him winter clothing of caribou fur he was amazed,” Tulugak said.

“Peter not only worked for economic development in Nunavik, but he cared for the Inuit and he and his family really contributed to the betterment of our lives in Nunavik. Rest in peace, our Ilannaaq Peter.”

Visitations for Murdoch will take place at the Rideau Memorial Gardens and Funeral Home at 4275 Sources Blvd. in Dollard-des-Ormeaux.

Visitation times are: Saturday, Dec. 12, 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.; and Sunday, Dec. 13, 10 a.m. to 11 a.m., followed by a funeral service.

A memorial service will be held in Puvirnituq at a later date.

Ilagiisak’s original statement said Peter Murdoch’s death occurred Dec. 7. However, they have informed us that the correct date is Dec. 9 and we have corrected our story accordingly.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674peter_murdoch_86_an_ally_and_servant_of_nunavik_dies_dec.7/

Blackfoot elder welcomes Syrian refugees to Calgary by detailing atrocities committed against First Nations

By [Dave Dormer](#), Calgary Sun

First posted: Friday, December 11, 2015 07:51 AM MST | Updated: Friday, December 11, 2015 09:25 AM MST



Syrian refugees, the Al Khodr family sit at Eau Claire Market in downtown Calgary, Alta. as they wait to take part in a welcoming ceremony by local First Nations on Thursday December 10, 2015. The family arrived in Canada on November 30th. Stuart Dryden/Calgary Sun/Postmedia Network

It was an interesting welcome to say the least.

Some of the first Syrian refugees to arrive in Calgary took part in a welcoming ceremony Thursday, hosted by members of the Blackfoot Nation.

The noon-hour event held at Eau Claire Market-in conjunction with the Calgary Centre for Global Community- included a number of important and traditional elements from First Nations culture, one of them a smudging ceremony, where sage is burned and the smoke wafted over the head and body as a form of purification.

Even though it was clear they didn't completely understand what was happening, the Syrian families happily took part, each taking turns to pull the smoke over themselves.

There was also a display of traditional singing and drumming along with dancing. Two very different cultures coming together as one.

But from there, the ceremony took a bit of a confusing turn.

In his speech to welcome the families to their new lives in Canada, a Blackfoot elder spent the better part of 15 minutes outlining various atrocities perpetrated by the Canadian government against First Nations over more than a century.

He detailed the decades of abuses suffered by Natives through the Residential School Program. And just before the smudging ceremony began, it was explained to the Syrians that the First Nations had to get special permission to be able to light the sage indoors, which the speaker saw as a further attack and erosion of Native culture.

The number of murdered and missing aboriginal women was also highlighted.

To put it bluntly, it was a bit awkward.

Yes, the treatment of First Nations in Canada is not something we should always be proud of.

The Residential School Program and its attempt to extinguish First Nations language and culture was very wrong on so many levels.

But intimating that arriving Syrians should somehow be wary of the country welcoming them with open arms was hardly appropriate, or even remotely helpful.

Direct Link: <http://www.calgarysun.com/2015/12/11/blackfoot-elder-welcomes-syrian-refugees-to-calgary-by-detailing-atrocities-committed-against-first-nations>

Parenting support program in Cape Breton adds aboriginal component

Program works with Mi'kmaq families living off-reserve anywhere on the island

By Peggy MacDonald, [CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 11, 2015 7:50 PM AT Last Updated: Dec 11, 2015 7:50 PM AT



Nadine Bernard works with families all over Cape Breton. (Courtesy of Nadine Bernard)

A provincial program that supports families in difficulty will have an aboriginal component in Cape Breton.

The Parenting Journey program is offered across Nova Scotia, but money announced last week by the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services will supplement it in Cape Breton to provide a culturally sensitive approach to struggling aboriginal families.

Nadine Bernard of the Native Council of Nova Scotia in Cape Breton runs the program from the Family Place Resource Centre in Sydney. She works with Mi'kmaq families living off-reserve anywhere on the island.

Off-reserve families

"Some of (the reasons) could be overcrowding, housing on First Nation communities," Bernard said.

"They could be coming from a 'domestic' and they feel like they need to escape from their community for their safety. They could be forced away, whether by law, or whatever situation they happen to be in. Employment; you know we have high unemployment in our First Nation communities, or just looking to find their own place."

Bernard said the needs of First Nation families are as diverse as those of non-aboriginals, but some circumstances are very different.

"What I've seen, from my experience, is parents parent with what they know and with what they've experienced," she explained.

"You see a lot of inter-generational effects from the residential schools, so you see a gap in parenting, whether they didn't have a parent present or they grew up in a single-parent home or there was addiction issues, they have that disconnect."

'Stuck and frustrated'

She said any of those issues could interfere with a person's ability parent as well as they might want to.

"So they get stuck," she said. "And they get frustrated and they don't know where to turn and it's easier for them to give up or revert back to those behaviours they had seen, whether it be addictions or even disconnecting from their child."

One of the hardest things about living off-reserve, Bernard said, is the loss of family contact.

"The Parenting Journey, over all, is delivered the same everywhere in the province. Ours would bring in more of a respect of the First Nation content. I always turn back to extended family and how supportive they are, being there full-time and assisting you on a daily basis."

Bernard said she fills that role, as an aboriginal woman, with many of her clients.

The Parenting Journey program is for families with children ages three to 16.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/parenting-journey-aboriginal-cape-breton-1.3361285>

Spurning Syrian Refugees Is Inhumane

[Sandra LaFleur](#)

12/13/15

I have been following the debate on social media regarding the 25,000 Syrian refugees and the angst and internal processes some Canadians are experiencing in their inability to accept the newcomers. And each rant that I read always brings me back to a same and curious, truthful reality that greed and fear are the predominate emotions driving these commenters with logic coming in a distant third. There is no humanity.

Some of the posts comments allude to their belief, "there won't be enough for me and my children if they come." Enough of what? I don't know. Most probably includes housing, health care, education and jobs (for starters). Still other people flat out proclaim all the Syrian refugees to be terrorists and write, "they'll bomb us if we let them in" while other posts read, "there's militant terrorists hiding within the 25,000 refugees, we can't take a chance" (the latter rant having some truth as nothing is absolute). Regardless, with all the negative comments being posted I can't help but note that a huge majority of the people posting have conveniently left out or forgot their family's own historical start on North American soil (Turtle Island).

Perhaps those against accepting the Syrian refugees need to be reminded or, in some cases, told the truth of the beginnings of their existence in Canada.

A simple condensed historical truth is that Indigenous folk accepted European strangers - straight out - at first contact. Not the third, fourth or fifth contact - the first contact.

When the European explorers floated, half dead and starving onto Turtle Island's shores, First Nations folk had to nurse the sailors back to health. A huge percentage of the sailors were dealing with scurvy. There wasn't a feast where Indigenous folk came running out of the forests, to the ships overjoyed and yelling, 'come dine with us, come sit in our homes, our daughters will serve you', as some historians might suggest. No.

At first contact the louse ridden, sick and starving Europeans would've died if not for Indigenous folk ministrations of medicines. It certainly would've been easier to let nature take its course and let the strangers die. However, First Nations cared for the incapacitated strangers without a second thought; there were no cries of "there's not enough!"

So, why the fear and confusion over the Syrian refugee issue?

I'm not going to regurgitate the same readily obvious and multi-posted rebuttals like; quoting previous statistical numbers of successful new immigrants, religious duty, crime statistics and neither am I bringing into question political affiliation. I simply am pointing out a logical and genuine truth; First Nation tribes most probably saved some of the disgruntled commenter's family's blood lines so their family names could continue to proliferate here on Turtle Island, period.

In continuation – and in condensed general form; First Nations folk taught the newcomers how to stay strong and once they were well, the immigrants were taught to fend for themselves; building fires, foraging for food, organizing shelters and sewing weather appropriate clothing and the black and shiny buckled shoes (the fashion of the time for European elite) were replaced with weather sturdy, leather shoes (moccasins).

Your great, great grandfather was taught about medicinal plants because your relatives needed to tend to your own. Your uncles, grandfathers, great grandfathers (and others), for the most part, were welcomed on North American soil and made to feel safe. There most probably were some First Nation doubters and naysayers warning of 'no good to come of these strangers' however, in this, first contact sense, humanity trumped fear.

"So why judge the Syrian immigrant?"

Some of you are just generations away from the malnourished European ancestors who washed up on the shores of Turtle Island. And it's beyond me how you've somehow managed to give yourselves the privileged right, to judge whether or not a different race of traumatized, beaten down and frightened people, is allowed onto Turtle Island.

Regardless, if any one group of people were to be consulted or have a say in 'deciding' who is welcomed onto Turtle Island I vote for a committee comprised of Indigenous people. And I'm not talking about the one First Nation guy wearing an Indigenous 'headdress' standing at the end of the line, shaking the hands of the new-Canadians at their swearing in ceremony, I'm talking about being involved in immigration and refugee claims - before the fact. I'm talking about developing policy, form criteria, being one of the governing bodies that accepts or denies entry at - first contact.

Indigenous people need to have a voice at Immigration Turtle Island (Canada).

All the Treaties have two signatures; a Crown representative's (European) name and the numbered Treaty Chief's signature hence, we're all children of the Treaties. Neither of our peoples are going anywhere any time soon.

Sandra LaFleur is a freelance writer living in Toronto ON and has been writing since the age of 15. Ms. LaFleur was raised by her maternal Granny, on the Alexander Cree First Nation. She was returned to bio-mother when she was school age. Ms. LaFleur is an Indigenous activist and works to affect change through her writing.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/12/13/spurning-syrian-refugees-inhumane>

Fourteen aboriginals recognized for being community role models

By [Brandon Gonez](#) Reporter Global News, December 12, 2015 7:17 pm



REGINA – It was a special day for 14 aboriginal people, both young and old, who were honoured for being role models by the Regina Aboriginal Professionals Association Board (RAPAB).

During a ceremony Saturday, Austin Thomson sat anxiously as he waited for his name to be called.

“It’s cool to be Mr. November in the calendar. I like saying that a lot,” said Thomson.

He’s one of the 14 role models featured in the 2016 edition of the ‘A Proud Generation’ calendar, recognizing each for their accomplishments.

“It’s just the ability to give back to them. Recognize their achievements, their accomplishments in our community and to encourage them to continue on that path to success,” said Brad Bellegarde, communications coordinator for RAPAB.

Though for Thomson, that success meant staying sober, going to school and aiming high for the future.

“I’d like to be an engineer, maybe a power engineer,” said Thomson.

While he’s still deciding his career path, one thing he does know is that life hasn’t been easy especially as a First Nations man.

“Usually other people think that we’re not as good or that we’re always doing bad things and it’s just kind of hard to break free from that,” explained Thomson.

Instead he chose a different path, finding a role model that inspires him.

“My uncle Mike Dubois is someone I look up to a lot. He’s shown me a lot throughout the years that education is something to strive for,” he added.

It’s those type of decisions why the calendar was created 11 years ago to recognize.

“Part of being a proud generation really what that is, is our community is surrounding those that we’re proud of,” said Tracey George Heese, the calendar’s original founder.

Each recipient receives a \$500 bursary and since the calendar’s inception over \$60,000 has been handed out.

Thomson, now one of those recipients, has some advice to his younger peers.

“Education is key! Going after education is going to take you places,” he said.

Each calendar will be sold for \$20 online, and organizers say all the proceeds will be reinvested back into the program, helping more achievers in the future.

Direct Link: <http://globalnews.ca/news/2397956/fourteen-aboriginals-recognized-for-being-community-role-models/>

Peter Murdoch of the Fédération des coopératives du Nouveau-Québec dies

Murdoch arrived in the North in 1947 as a Hudson's Bay clerk

[CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 14, 2015 7:30 AM CT Last Updated: Dec 14, 2015 7:30 AM CT



Peter Murdoch, centre, is seen here with (left to right): Abe Okpik, Eddie Kikoak, Elijah Menarik and Simonie Michaelwas. Murdoch was the director of the Apex Rehabilitation Centre in Frobisher Bay

(Iqaluit) in 1961. He's seen here at a planning meeting for a series of Inuktitut radio plays that ran on CBC Radio that year. (Charles Gimpel)

A man remembered as an "ally and servant of the Inuit of Nunavik" has died.

Peter Murdoch helped establish the Fédération des coopératives du Nouveau-Québec, which he remained active with for his entire life.

Born Sept. 3, 1929 in Labrador, Nfld., Murdoch made his foray into the North as a Hudson's Bay manager in 1947. This work took him to numerous communities throughout present-day Nunavut and Nunavik, where he learned Inuit culture and language.

Murdoch also worked for the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development before joining with the Puvirnituk Cooperative Association to establish the Fédération des coopératives du Nouveau-Québec in 1967. The co-ops offer retail and other services and are run exclusively by Cree and Inuit staff.

Murdoch received the order of Canada in 2015.

"Those he worked with at the FCNQ regarded Peter as friend, mentor, confidante, advisor and father figure," says a statement released by the organization.

"We share our sadness with those he touched and console ourselves in the knowledge that Peter leaves behind a family united, a thriving Federation and the people stronger for having grown with him."

Murdoch passed away peacefully on Dec. 9. Services were held this weekend in Dollard-des-Ormeux, Que., and are planned for the new year in Nunavik.

He is survived by his wife, Lucille.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/nunavik-s-peter-murdoch-dies-1.3363363>

Some statistics on indigenous Canadians

[Mark Kennedy, Ottawa Citizen](#)

Published on: December 14, 2015 | Last Updated: December 14, 2015 5:26 PM EST

The Truth and Reconciliation final report includes statistics comparing Canada's Aboriginal people to the general population in five key areas:

Child welfare

- A 2013 Statistics Canada survey found 14,225 aboriginal children under the age of 14 were in foster care, representing 3.6 per cent of all aboriginal children under the age of 14. (By comparison, at the height of the residential school era, 10,112 were in the schools at a given time.)
- A 2011 Statistics Canada report found that although aboriginal people make up only 4.8 per cent of Canada's population, they represent almost half (48.1 per cent) of all children aged 14 and younger in foster care in Canada.

Education

- A 2011 Statistics Canada survey found 28.9 per cent of Aboriginal people aged 25 to 64, had “no certificate, diploma or degree,” while the proportion for non-Aboriginal people in the same age group was 12.1 per cent.
- In 2006, only 2.9 per cent of First Nations people living on reserve had completed a university education, compared to 18.1 per cent of the general Canadian population.
- Lower levels of education have led to lower earnings, compared to non-aboriginals. The median income for aboriginal people in 2006 was \$18,962 versus \$27,097 for non-Aboriginals.

Language and culture

- The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has found that 70 per cent of Canada's aboriginal languages are endangered.
- In 2011, Statistics Canada found that 14.5 per cent of the aboriginal population reported that their first language learned was an aboriginal language. That's down from 18 per cent in the 2006 census, and 26 per cent in the 1996 census.

Health

- The overall suicide rate among First Nation communities is about twice that of the total Canadian population.
- Aboriginal youth between the ages of 10 and 29, living on reserves, are five to six times more likely to die by suicide than are non-aboriginal youth.
- First Nations and Inuit infant mortality rates range from 1.7 to more than four times the non-aboriginal rate.

Justice

- In 2011, aboriginal people made up four per of the Canadian population, but accounted for 28 per cent of admissions to sentenced custody.

- Aboriginal women report being victimized by violent crime at a rate almost three times higher than non-aboriginal women (13 per cent of aboriginal women reported being victimized by violent crime in 2009).
- In 2013, aboriginals constituted 23.2 per cent of the federal inmate population.
- Since 2005-06, there has been a 43.5-per-cent increase in the aboriginal population in federal prisons for those serving sentences of two years or more, compared to a rise of 9.6 per cent for non-aboriginal inmates.

Direct Link: <http://ottawacitizen.com/news/national/some-statistics-on-indigenous-canadians>

Edmonton Inuit re-start local org with Christmas feast

"I'm the most proud of the fact that we have every Inuit region on our board"

ALEX BOYD, December 16, 2015 - 7:00 am



Norma Dunning, vice president of the newly formed Inuit Edmontonmiut, says getting newcomers settled, especially post-secondary students and people visiting on medical travel, is one of the priorities of the new urban Inuit organization in Alberta's capital. (PHOTO BY ALEX BOYD)

Special to Nunatsiaq News

EDMONTON — For Meeka Otway, moving to Edmonton was more than just coming to a new city. It meant leaving a way of life behind.

"When you're coming from an Inuit region, you're leaving your family who have helped you raise your children or who have helped in every which way that you can think of," she said of her relocation to Alberta's capital 23 years ago.

"When you move to a city, there's no help," Otway said.

If some transplanted Edmontonians have their way, that's about to change.

On Dec. 19 a group of Edmonton Inuit will come together for their first Christmas feast to celebrate the season and the creation of a new group.

That group has big plans to provide a gathering place and act as a voice for the growing community. Its members are calling the group "Inuit Edmontonmiut" for now.

For Otway, Inuit Edmontonmiut was born of memories from her first few years in Edmonton — and of not knowing any other Inuit in the city.

As president of the new organization, Otway said she hopes the new group will make sure newcomers to the city don't feel as alone and disoriented as she did.

There's a political element as well — part of the motivation involved a chance to weigh in on the national urban Inuit strategy currently in the works, Otway said.

Among the Inuit Edmontonmiut's first official acts was to send a delegation to the meeting of southern Inuit groups held last month by the Inuit Tungasuvvingat organization in Ottawa. Representatives from TI will also be coming to Edmonton in early January to meet with the group.

"Urban Inuit have to start having voices," Otway said, comparing the experience of an Inuk coming south to an immigrant newly arrived in Canada.

But while new immigrants have plenty of services to draw upon, Inuit in Edmonton have no Inuit-specific services in place.

Otway said she hopes this new group — and the new strategy — will change that.

"I'm hoping as we get bigger, we get a bigger voice," she said.

While Edmonton isn't usually thought of as a major centre for Inuit, that has already changed.

According to Statistics Canada 1,115 Inuit lived in Edmonton as of 2011, giving this city one of the largest per capita urban Inuit populations in southern Canada.

The new board of the Edmontonmiut has only eight members, but they represent a cross-section from the Inuit community, Otway said. There are people from Nunavut, Nunavik and the Northwest Territories. There's an elder and several university students.

"I'm the most proud of the fact that we have every Inuit region on our board," Otway said. "I am really excited about that."

One thing that draws Inuit to Edmonton are post-secondary institutions such as the University of Alberta which offers a transitional year so students can ease into an undergraduate program.

Norma Dunning, the new group's vice president, was one of the those drawn south by educational opportunities. For Dunning, a PhD student specializing in Indigenous Peoples Education, the move from the tiny Nunavut hamlet of Whale Cove to a city of almost a million people was disorienting.

"I didn't know that stores stayed open late," Dunning said, laughing at the memory. When she arrived 25 years ago, just getting around the city was intimidating.

Dunning said she sees supporting new university students as being a priority for the new group. As well, Inuit in town for medical services often require support and translation services.

To that list of priorities, Otway adds the need for more arts and culture programming, a childcare centre and a medical centre.

"There's a lot of things that are lacking for Inuit here," she said.

Right now, their biggest limitation: funding, the same problem that challenged past Inuit groups in the city.

But Dunning said she is optimistic that this time is different. TI's national strategy has highlighted the issue, technology has made it easier to connect people, and, "there's a passion that I think will carry this group," she said.

While they've got a lot to do to bring their plans to life, right now it's enough to have a reason for urban Inuit to gather where once there wasn't.

"It's just being around your own, that's all there is to it," Dunning said. "It's being in the presence of each other."

Direct Link: http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674edmonton_inuit_re-start_local_org_with_christmas_feast/

Aboriginal Crime, Justice & Law Enforcement

RCMP head tells indigenous chiefs there are 'racists' on his force

'Some of the worst racists carry a gun and they carry a badge,' says BC grand chief



RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson says there is no room for racists on his police force.

By: [Tanya Talaga](#) Global Economics Reporter, Published on Wed Dec 09 2015

Speaking for the first time before the Assembly of First Nations conference, Royal Canadian Mounted Police Commissioner Bob Paulson admitted there are racists on his police force and that he does not want them there.

Paulson, who addressed the special AFN chiefs assembly [on murdered and missing indigenous women and girls](#) on Wednesday, was responding to British Columbia Grand Chief Doug Kelly, who was the first chief to stand up and address Paulson directly.

“We encounter racism every single day. Some of the worst racists carry a gun and they carry a badge, authorized by you, Commissioner Paulson . . . We need you to confront racism in the ranks,” said Kelly, the grand chief of the Sto:lo Tribal Council.

Paulson said there is no room for racists on his police force and that if any of the chiefs are having problems, they should pick up the phone and “call me if you are having a problem with a racist” in their area.

“I hear what you say. I understand there are racists in my police force. I don’t want them to be in my police force,” Paulson said at the three-day meeting in Gatineau of hundreds of indigenous chiefs and leaders from coast to coast to coast.

Chiefs have big concerns over racism and how police forces interact with indigenous people. The Star series *Gone: Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women*, recently took an in-depth examination of [Thunder Bay’s struggle with racism](#), including the unsolved hate crime sexual assault of a mother of six.

First Nations chiefs and leaders have a litany of concerns on how the RCMP and all police forces handle cases of murdered and missing indigenous women and girls.

Last April, then aboriginal affairs minister Bernard Valcourt caused a firestorm after he told a meeting of First Nations chiefs that, in 70 per cent of the cases of murdered and missing aboriginal women, indigenous men had been the perpetrators.

That pronouncement stunned indigenous leaders as it was not explained in the first RCMP report on murdered and missing indigenous girls and women released in May 2014. The chiefs challenged the 70 per cent figure and demanded more information.

That first RCMP report shocked the nation with the tally of 1,181 murdered and missing aboriginal women and girls. Paulson noted it was the first review to use data of over 300 police forces.

In its updated report released this year, the RCMP said in the past couple of years, the offender was known to the victim in every solved homicide of an aboriginal woman in RCMP jurisdictions.

Nishnawbe Aski Nation Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler called the notion of First Nations women only being killed by their boyfriends and spouses a “myth.”

Paulson called the revised RCMP report released in 2015, the “most comprehensive statistical review to date.”

“It was no easy feat. Some people question the data and some people question the interpretation of the data,” he said.

Paulson reminded the chiefs that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has committed to launching an inquiry and that the RCMP would participate and that they “are going to listen. Of course, this is nothing short of a national tragedy.”

The Star has [highlighted concerns with some of the RCMP findings](#), specifically with what “known to” the victim means and the solve rates of homicides.

After the RCMP refused to answer questions on their numbers and requests to share the data, the Star spent a year putting together its own database and compiled a list of 1,129 names. (Sixteen months after the Star’s access to information request the RCMP in October provided 2,000 pages of material with all the names of the murdered and missing redacted.)

The Star analysis suggests 44 per cent of the women were victims of acquaintances, strangers and serial killers. This finding is based on a review of publicly available information on more than 750 murder cases. Of that number, 224 murders remain unsolved.

Our review found 420 cases where details of the relationship between victim and offender were known. Some of the cases date to the 1960s and of those, only half of the victims were domestically related to the perpetrator. Further, the Star analysis showed 16

per cent of the offenders were acquaintances; 15 per cent were strangers; and 13 per cent serial killers.

The Star data, which was taken by news reports and court documents, found between 1980 and 2012, the solved rate in cases of murdered indigenous women was 70 per cent and not the 88 per cent solve rate the RCMP reported in 2014.

In Ontario, our review found from 1980 to 2012, there was a solve rate of 77 per cent but looking at the Ontario cases, regardless of time frame, the solved rate drops to 69 per cent.

Paulson said the Ontario Provincial Police will shortly be coming out with its own report on murdered and missing indigenous women and men.

Perry Bellegarde, AFN national chief, praised Paulson for addressing the chiefs and that his presence at the meeting is evidence he is trying to improve relations between First Nations people and the RCMP.

“You are starting to earn that trust and respect. Just by being here,” Bellegarde said as he gave him a birch bark basket with a black bear on it as a gift for coming to the conference.

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/news/insight/2015/12/09/rcmp-head-tells-indigenous-chiefs-there-are-racists-on-his-force.html>

Quebec chiefs demanding Indigenous investigators join Val D’Or abuse investigation

[National News](#) | December 10, 2015 by [Tom Fennario](#)



Tom Fennario
APTN National News

The Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador (ANFQL) is asking the Quebec

government to add two Indigenous investigators to an investigation into allegations of abuse by Quebec's provincial police, the Surete du Quebec (SQ), APTN National News has learned.

AFNQL Chief Ghislain Picard has drafted a letter to Quebec Premier Phillip Couillard asking that Mylène Trudeau, Abenaki, and Derek St-Cyr, a James Bay Cree, work side by side with the investigating team already in place.

Both are experienced police investigators working in First Nations communities.

“At the very least, they can have two of our Indigenous officers working with the Montreal police, who we do not trust to properly investigate the SQ,” said Kanesatake Mohawk Territory Grand Chief Serge Simon who took part in the meeting where the decision was made to draft the letter.

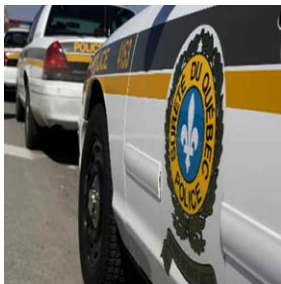
Eight members of Val d'Or's SQ are facing 14 allegations of physical, and in some cases, sexual abuse against 12 Indigenous women in the Val d'Or region. Those officers are currently on leave and not patrolling the community.

Investigations are currently being conducted by Montreal police under the observation of a human rights lawyer.

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/12/10/quebec-chiefs-drafting-letter-demanding-indigenous-investigators-join-val-dor-abuse-investigation/>

Letter requests inclusion of First Nations police in Val d'Or investigation

[National News](#) | December 11, 2015 by [APTN National News](#)



APTN National News

A letter sent to Quebec's minister of Public Safety Wednesday, and obtained by APTN National News is asking the province to honour an agreement allowing two First Nations police officers to be included in the investigation of abuse in Val d'Or, Que., that is currently underway.

At the moment, investigators with the Montreal police (SPVM) are looking into allegations of physical and sexual abuse of Indigenous women by eight members of the Surete du Quebec (SQ) in Val d'Or, about 500 kilometres northwest of Montreal.

According to the letter, chiefs of the Assembly of First Nations Quebec and Labrador (AFNQL) proposed that First Nations police officers join the investigation at a meeting with the acting Minister of Public Safety Pierre Moreau and Native Affairs Minister Geoffrey Kelley Nov. 23.

“Our Chiefs are convinced that the professionalism and familiarity with the setting of our First Nation officers can greatly benefit, on the one hand, the conduct of the inquiry, and on the other hand, the confidence of our populations in the impartiality of this inquiry,” states the letter dated Dec. 9 and signed by AFNQL Chief Ghislain Picard.

Chiefs of the AFNQL are also asking for an independent inquiry into the allegations against the SQ.

The request was turned down at a meeting with Quebec Premier Phillippe Couillard because of the federal inquiry that was promised by the federal Liberal party.

APTN has requested an interview and statement from both ministers, but have not heard back at the time of the publication.

But according to the letter, both seemed open to the idea of allowing two First Nations investigators to join the investigation.

“At the time of the November 23rd meeting, you accepted the request of the participation of our officers in the SPVM inquiry, for which we are very thankful,” according to the letter.

The two officers are Mylène Trudeau, Abenaki police officer, and Derek St-Cyr, a James Bay Cree police officers. Neither could be reached for comment.

According to the letter, both are experienced police investigators working in First Nations communities.

“At the very least, they can have two of our Indigenous officers working with the Montreal police, who we do not trust to properly investigate the SQ,” said Kanasatake Mohawk Territory Grand Chief Serge Simon who took part in the meeting where the decision was made to draft the letter.

Eight members of Val d'Or's SQ are facing 14 allegations of physical, and in some cases, sexual abuse against 12 Indigenous women in the Val d'Or region.

Those officers are currently on leave and not patrolling the community.

Investigations are currently being conducted by Montreal police under the observation of a human rights lawyer.

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/12/11/letter-requests-inclusion-of-first-nations-police-in-val-dor-investigation/>

Stamp out racism against aboriginals in RCMP: Editorial

RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson admits there is racism against First Nations people in his force. Now he has to take steps to end it — and prevent it.



RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson at a Commons committee in Ottawa earlier this year.

Published on Fri Dec 11 2015

RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson deserves considerable credit for taking first steps this week towards building a much-needed new relationship between his force and Canada's aboriginal people.

First, he [addressed](#) a meeting of the Assembly of First Nations to acknowledge the need for a new relationship between his officers and indigenous peoples.

Then he didn't balk at tough talk after his speech, including being told by British Columbia Grand Chief Doug Kelly: "Some of the worst racists carry a gun and they carry a badge, authorized by you."

Instead, Paulson acknowledged there are racists in his force and he would love to be rid of them. Then he encouraged chiefs to call him if they experience racism from RCMP officers in their communities, promising "decisive" disciplinary measures.

That's all good. But the commissioner can do much more than simply denouncing racism in the force. He can and should take concrete steps to end it.

The first would be to ensure there is a curriculum and sensitivity training in place at the RCMP academy that is strong enough to counter ignorance among cadets about First Nations culture.

As [Nishnawbe Aski Nation](#) Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler told the Star's Tanya Talaga, in a story in a series about murdered and missing indigenous women, getting to the root causes of racism requires understanding and, most of all, education.

That is why one of 94 recommendations in Justice Murray Sinclair's Truth and Reconciliation Commission report is for aboriginal studies courses to be instituted in all schools across the country. They are needed, he says, to counter the notion that "First Nations were heathens, pagans, savages who made no contribution to their country."

It's a recommendation that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau says he will implement. And it's one that Paulson should, too.

Regardless of the training cadets at the academy receive under the National Aboriginal Policing Services program, which works with aboriginal groups to develop policing approaches, racists are slipping through, as Paulson himself acknowledges.

And while it's important to stamp out racism in the RCMP directed at anyone, it's especially important to fight biases against First Nations peoples on the force.

That's because the RCMP polices more than 600 First Nations communities. As well, it is often the only police force in northern and western cities that have high concentrations of aboriginal residents.

It won't be easy. Teachers themselves, for the most part, haven't received an education in First Nations culture and history.

Still, Paulson should have little difficulty finding experts to teach aboriginal history, culture, and sensitivity training at the academy. It is, after all, situated in Regina, where almost 10 per cent of the population is First Nations, compared with only 4 per cent in Canada as a whole.

In the end, Paulson succeeded in starting a new relationship with First Nations peoples. The assembly's national chief, Perry Bellegarde, says he was heartened by Paulson's presence at the chiefs' meeting and the fact he stayed to answer pointed questions.

Now comes the tough part: making sure racism against aboriginals has no place in the RCMP.

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorials/2015/12/11/stamp-out-racism-against-aboriginals-in-rcmp-editorial.html>

Enquête investigation into Val d'Or now available in English

A case of a missing indigenous woman in Val d'Or, Quebec, led to another shocking story

[CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 12, 2015 2:40 PM ET Last Updated: Dec 12, 2015 2:42 PM ET



Bianca Moushoun is among the aboriginal women in Val d'Or, Que. who have filed formal complaints against Quebec police officers who she said gave her beer and traded sex acts for money and cocaine. (Radio-Canada)

As you enter Val d'Or, northern Quebec, just off the side of highway 117, there is a small memorial, including flowers and a cross. It marks the spot where the remains of a young aboriginal woman were found. Jeannie Poucachiche was murdered in 2003, on her 20th birthday.

Every year in October, women and children come here to remember. This year they were also here to remember Cindy Ruperthouse, a 44-year-old Algonquin woman who has not been seen since the spring of 2014. Another of the missing among the many missing in Canada — a case that never made the headlines and was slowly fading from memory.

Radio-Canada's investigative program, *Enquête*, wanted to know whether the police had done all they could to find Ruperthouse. Their investigation took them to Val d'Or, a town in northern Quebec.

What they found there was shocking.

They said officers routinely picked up women who appeared to be intoxicated, drove them out of town and left them to walk home in the cold. Some allege they were physically assaulted or made to perform sex acts.

Since *Enquête* aired its report in October, there have been several developments in this story.

More women has come forward with allegations. The investigation of police abuse in Val d'Or was transferred to the Montreal police force, as many were questioning the validity of SQ investigating the actions of its own members.

A new police chief, a woman, is now in place in Val d'Or. Police cruisers will now all be equipped with cameras and they will often be accompanied by social workers.

[The Cree of northern Quebec suspended all activities in the town](#), including their lucrative annual hockey tournament, which brings millions of dollars to the community.

More resources have been put in place to help the aboriginal homeless in Val d'Or. There is more funding available for aboriginal housing, a day shelter for the homeless, and more front line resources.

[The investigation looking into Ruperthouse's disappearance](#) took another turn. The police are now treating it as a homicide.

And Quebec's National Assembly has begun its own inquiry into the sexual abuse of aboriginal women.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/investigation-into-val-d-or-now-available-in-english-1.3362534>

Canadian police arrest man in Aboriginal teen's murder

Fri Dec 11, 2015 3:38pm EST

By Rod Nickel

WINNIPEG, Manitoba (Reuters) - Canadian police have arrested a man in the murder of a 15-year-old girl, whose death last year focused attention on the country's problem of indigenous women disappearing or being killed.

Tina Fontaine's body was found in a bag in Winnipeg, Manitoba's Red River in August 2014. Her death also focused attention on Manitoba's child welfare system, as the thin Aboriginal girl had run away from government care in a hotel.

More than a year after her death, Winnipeg Police Service said on Friday that it had charged Raymond Joseph Cormier, a 53-year-old unemployed man, with second-degree murder. He was arrested Wednesday in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Fontaine, lonely and confused over the earlier death of her father, ran away from her Winnipeg hotel and was "highly vulnerable and exploited while on the run," said Winnipeg Deputy Chief Danny Smyth. Police would not elaborate on how she was exploited.

"This was particularly horrific," said Sgt. John O'Donovan, of the discovery of Fontaine's body. "When you see the pictures of this little kid before she died, (it's clear) she's just a little kid."

Manitoba's government proposed legislation this month that would involve indigenous communities more closely in care of children who need protection. It said last month that it no longer uses hotels to house children in care.

Aboriginals, who make up 5.0 percent of Canada's population, have higher levels of poverty and a lower life expectancy than other Canadians, and are more often victims of violent crime, addiction and incarceration.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police said in 2014 that 1,017 Aboriginal women had been murdered between 1980 and 2012. Another 108 are missing under suspicious circumstances, with some cases dating back to 1952.

"We are just as shocked and outraged by the violence we observe directed against women in general and the violence we observe directed at indigenous women and children in particular," Smyth said.

Canada's new Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said this week his government would set up an inquiry on missing and murdered indigenous women.

(Reporting by Rod Nickel in Winnipeg, Manitoba)

Direct Link:

<http://ca.reuters.com/article/domesticNews/idCAKBN0TU2MX20151211?sp=true>

Racism, history keep aboriginal people off Edmonton juries, expert says

[Gordon Kent, Edmonton Journal](#)

Published on: December 14, 2015 | Last Updated: December 14, 2015 3:51 PM MST



An expert at a pre-trial hearing says that aboriginals are underrepresented on Edmonton juries. Ed Kaiser / Edmonton Journal

An expert testifying in a pre-trial hearing says that social and economic factors reduce the number of aboriginal people on Edmonton juries.

Jeremy Lyle Newborn is charged with the second-degree murder of John Hollar, who was beaten to death while riding the LRT in December 2012. Newborn is challenging the way juries are selected.

Statistics and aboriginal data expert Jaqueline Quinless said Monday there would have been eight or nine aboriginal people in a randomly selected group of Edmonton residents of similar size to the pool from which jury members are picked.

But issues such as the impact of residential schools on rates of substance abuse, violence and literacy, along with stereotyping, higher mobility and high levels of aboriginal incarceration can form barriers to participation, said Quinless, who teaches at Victoria's Royal Roads University and the University of Victoria.

"All these factors would make it much more challenging for aboriginal people to be represented," she said.

"Historically, when we look at the relationship between aboriginal people and the criminal justice system, there's been a lot of tension ... Aboriginal people have had a more negative experience with the criminal justice system than non-aboriginal people."

Newborn, 32, has pleaded not guilty. He was supposed to stand trial last year, but his family and defence lawyer were concerned by the lack of jury pool members who were visibly aboriginal.

Quinless is the only witness scheduled at the hearing, which is expected to last for two or three days.

Direct Link: <http://edmontonjournal.com/news/crime/low-chance-edmonton-jury-pool-wouldnt-include-aboriginal-people-expert-testifies>

Police street checks 'invaluable,' says aboriginal former Saskatoon cop

[Jason Warick, Saskatoon StarPhoenix](#)

Published on: December 14, 2015 | Last Updated: December 14, 2015 6:29 AM CST



Retired police officer, Ernie Louttit, spent more than 25 years policing the roughest streets in Saskatoon. Liam Richards / The StarPhoenix

The benefits of police street checks far outweigh any negatives, says an aboriginal ex-officer.

“It’s invaluable to be able to check people. It has helped solve so many crimes, from vandalism to murder,” said Ernie Louttit.

Louttit, who retired in 2013 from the Saskatoon Police Service, said it’s essential police officers be able to question suspicious individuals. He agrees the checks should be conducted for specific reasons rather than random hunches.

Louttit also lauded the efforts of police Chief Clive Weighill and the police commission to disclose statistics on the practice and to come up with a street check policy in the new year.

“I get it that it can be frustrating for a kid who’s checked seven or eight times,” said Louttit, author of two books on his 26 years policing the streets of Saskatoon. “But it’s hard to argue against them. It’s just good police practice.”

Not all communication between police and the public is a street check. Chatting with suspects, homeless people who need help or other members of the public allows police to learn about their community, and vice-versa.

Louitt believes residents of high-crime neighbourhoods or crime “hot spots” want police to be conducting more street checks there.

“It’s about what kind of community we want to live in,” he said.

Direct Link: <http://thestarphoenix.com/news/crime/police-street-checks-invaluable-says-aboriginal-former-saskatoon-cop>

Cree woman says she was ignored by Montreal police after assault

Jeannie Icebound says officers didn't even get out of their patrol car after she was punched in the face

By Betsy Longchap, Susan Bell, [CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 15, 2015 12:12 PM CT Last Updated: Dec 15, 2015 12:59 PM CT



Jeannie Icebound shows some of the bruising around her face and eye. Icebound says that she was punched in the face by a stranger on December 1, but that officers didn't even get out of their patrol car before leaving. (submitted by Jeannie Icebound)

A Cree woman from the James Bay region of Northern Quebec has filed a complaint against Montreal police who she says failed to help her after she was punched in the face by a stranger on a downtown street corner.

Jeannie Icebound, originally from Waswanipi, was walking along St. Catherine Street after supper on December 1st, when she says a man walked up and punched her hard enough to knock her off her feet and onto the ground and make her nose bleed.

After waiting a half an hour for police to arrive, Icebound says officers didn't even get out of their patrol car to come and see her, but told her boyfriend Wayne they had to leave for another emergency before leaving without their sirens on.

"I see more of that they don't care about aboriginal people," said Icebound. "This is how I felt when the police did not even come to assist me. I felt he did not care about what Aboriginal women go through."

Icebound filed her complaint Monday night with the help of Alan Gull, who is with Native Para-Judicial Services of Quebec.

"It was unacceptable that the police did not assist her," said Gull. "I don't know why the police responded this way and I feel like they shouldn't have neglected her. And I hope there will be serious consequences for the responding officers."

In June of 2015, the head of Montreal police [signed an agreement with the Montreal Urban Aboriginal Community Strategy Network](#) to establish an aboriginal committee within the police force, add cultural training and create a liaison position within the force.



'It was unacceptable that the police did not assist her,' said Alan Gull, who is with Native Para-Judicial Services of Quebec. Gull helped Icebound file her complaint against police. (CBC)

Icebound say she doesn't trust most police forces in Quebec and says after she returned home had to go to the clinic because her blood pressure was too high from the shock of what happened to her.

Montreal police say they cannot comment on Icebound's individual case until the investigation is complete.

But Carlo DeAngelis, who is the newly hired aboriginal liaison officer within the force, says they are very committed to improving the trust between aboriginal communities and Montreal police.

"There is always room for improvement," said DeAngelis. "We are very committed and strive to get better every day and build that trust."

The force has begun working with indigenous communities and has started sensitivity training for its officers.

Gull says it's important not to blame the whole force.

"A lot of the aboriginal entities, they have good working agreements with the SPVM [Service de Police de la Ville de Montréal]," said Gull. "For me myself, I trust the police. I've built a good relationship with them."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/cree-woman-ignored-by-police-1.3366085>

Babyfound slain in Samson Cree Nation

FIRST POSTED: TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2015 12:51 PM MST |

UPDATED: TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2015 01:00 PM MST



A 14-month-old baby was found slain Saturday night in a Samson Cree Nation home.

A 28-year-old woman has been charged with second-degree murder.

Wetaskiwin Emergency Medical Services (EMS) responding to a report of a child in distress at the home around 8:43 p.m. found the baby dead.

Members of the Maskwacis RCMP detachment, together with investigators from the RCMP Major Crimes Unit, commenced an extensive investigation.

A Monday autopsy by the Edmonton Medical Examiner's Office confirmed that the manner of death is homicide. The woman was then charged.

Direct Link: <http://www.edmontonsun.com/2015/12/15/baby-found-slain-in-samson-cree-nation-home>

Val-d'Or abuse allegations: two aboriginal officers join investigation

Montreal police head investigation into abuse allegations involving SQ officers in Val-d'Or

CBC News Posted: Dec 15, 2015 12:53 PM ET Last Updated: Dec 15, 2015 1:11 PM ET



Eight SQ officers in Val-d'Or have been suspended since the allegations of physical assault and sexual abuse came to light in Radio-Canada's Enquête program. (Radio-Canada)

Two aboriginal police officers will join the team of investigators looking into the allegations of physical and sexual abuse by provincial police officers in Val-d'Or, Quebec Public Security Minister Pierre Moreau said Tuesday in a news release.

The Montreal police force is leading the investigation.

The Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador (AFNQL) requested that the investigation include officers from aboriginal police forces in Quebec in a meeting in the Huron-Wendat community of Wendake with Moreau and Aboriginal Affairs Minister Geoffrey Kelley on Nov. 23.

The AFNQL named two officers, Mylène Trudeau and Derek St-Cyr. The minister said they will have complete access to all the documents and evidence in the investigation.

The investigation was launched after Radio-Canada's *Enquête* reported in October that several aboriginal women had been physically and sexually assaulted by Sûreté du Québec officers stationed in Val-d'Or.

Val-d'Or, about 500 kilometres northwest of Montreal, is located close to several Algonquin communities.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/val-dor-police-sexual-abuse-1.3366029>

Cree Nation gov't lifts boycott on city of Val d'Or

'We are going to have to work very hard to... attack the cancerous discrimination that keeps us separated'

By Christopher Herodier, Susan Bell, CBC News Posted: Dec 15, 2015 6:29 PM CT Last Updated: Dec 15, 2015 6:29 PM CT



Cree Nation Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come, Pierre Corbeil, the mayor of Val d'Or, and chiefs from the nearby Anishnabe community of Lac Simon and the Algonquin communities of Kitcisakik and Abitibiwinni sign the Déclaration de Val-d'Or, ending the Cree Nation's economic boycott of the city. (Vanessa Limage/Radio-Canada)

Saying it is satisfied things are moving in the right direction, the Cree Nation government announced today it is lifting **a boycott of the Quebec community of Val d'Or**, put in place in reaction to allegations that police officers with the Sûreté du Québec abused and sexually assaulted aboriginal women in the city.

Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come held a joint press conference with Pierre Corbeil, the mayor of Val d'Or, along with chiefs from the nearby Algonquin communities of Lac Simon, Kitcisakik and Abitibiwinni.

Leaders of the groups signed the Déclaration de Val-d'Or at the press conference, ending the boycott.

"We have seen (Val d'Or) working hard to remedy the relations that have been damaged and broken," said Coon Come. "We have decided that our children need to play their tournaments here, and bring back some healing."

The allegations against the SQ officers came to light in **a Radio-Canada investigation done by the program Enquête in October.**

Coon Come said it was important for the chiefs to "stand shoulder to shoulder" with Val d'Or as the city commits to fight racism head on, something the mayor of Val d'Or appreciates.

"We are talking about a real atmosphere of reconciliation and collaboration," said Corbeil. "If Val d'Or was highlighted by these unfortunate events, we will also be highlighted for these positive initiatives."

Some of the initiatives Corbeil has committed to are the creation of a liaison committee within the municipality and conducting a policy review. The city is also launching diversity campaigns and holding cultural awareness sessions with municipal employees.

In early December, Val d'Or city council also passed a motion calling on the Quebec government to launch a provincial inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. Coon Come said this morning that this was the most important action Val d'Or has taken.

"It is only through a provincial judicial inquiry that we will get a true understanding of how deep the problem (of discrimination) runs," said Coon Come. "And where we are going to have to work very hard to root out and attack the cancerous discrimination that keeps us separated."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/cree-government-lifts-boycott-1.3366898>

First Nations student deaths inquest: 'I wanted closure' witness says

'Did they ever find out what happened to Kyle?' student's former roommate asks inquest

CBC News Posted: Dec 16, 2015 7:00 AM ET Last Updated: Dec 16, 2015 7:00 AM ET



The inquest into the deaths of seven First Nations students in Thunder Bay began in October 2015 and is expected to wrap up in March 2016. (Josh Lynn/CBC)

A First Nations student who lived in the same boarding home as Kyle Morriseau says he offered to testify at the coroner's inquest into Morriseau's death because he wanted closure — but counsel for the coroner told him, he's unlikely to get it.

William Oombash testified on Tuesday at the inquest into the deaths of seven First Nations students who died while attending high school in Thunder Bay between 2000 and 2011.

Oombash lived at the same boarding home as Kyle Morriseau and was among those last to see the 17-year-old on Oct. 26, 2009. Morriseau never returned to the boarding home. His body was pulled from the McIntyre River on Nov. 10, 2009.

"I wanted closure for myself," Oombash said when he was thanked for his testimony. "Did they ever find out what happened to Kyle?"

"We've heard a lot of evidence and I think we all agree that no one knows how Kyle got into the river," coroner's council Karen Shea responded.



Kyle Morriseau, from Keewaywin First Nation, died in 2009 while attending high school in Thunder Bay. (CBC)

Jurors at the inquest are tasked with determining the means by which each student died.

The coroner's office has hired someone to offer support to witnesses, including those like Oombash who testify by video conference from a remote location. Shea asked Oombash if he'd like to receive a call from the support person.

"He can call me when he has answers," Oombash said.

Earlier, Oombash had testified that Morriveau showed him a prescription pill on the night before he disappeared.

"I told him, I don't do that stuff," Oombash said, but Kyle gave him half. "He gave me a straw and it went up my nose."

Morriveau said he only had the one pill that he would need to pay for, Oombash said, adding that Morriveau appeared anxious about meeting someone that night.

'He was gone'

He watched his roommate leave the Minnesota Street boarding home, "walk to the sidewalk in the distance and he was gone," Oombash said.

That's the part he told Thunder Bay police officers who questioned him after Morriveau was reported missing, but Oombash admitted during the inquest to leaving out the part about the Percocet.

"I wasn't going to talk to a police officer about my drug use," Oombash said.

Oombash said he was aware other students were taking part in the search for Morriveau but didn't feel up to going out to look himself.

"Nobody likes post traumatic stress from seeing a body," he said. "I was afraid to see those things."

Oombash said student support workers arranged for him to receive grief counseling and he finished his Grade 11 credits that year. He never finished high school.

Testimony about Morriveau's death is expected to conclude on Thursday. The inquest will then adjourn until January when it will examine the death of Jordan Wabasse, who died in 2011.

In February a second phase of the inquest will call experts to help the jurors form recommendations for preventing similar deaths in Thunder Bay.

The recommendations are expected in March.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/first-nations-student-deaths-inquest-i-wanted-closure-witness-says-1.3366789>

Aboriginal people not deliberately excluded from juries, Crown says

Defence provided no evidence that Jury Act deliberately excludes indigenous people, Crown says

[CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 15, 2015 3:47 PM MT Last Updated: Dec 15, 2015 3:47 PM MT



Jeremy Newborn listens to testimony at a pre-trial hearing in Edmonton on Monday. (Jennifer Poburan)

The Crown emphatically denied Tuesday that indigenous people are being deliberately excluded from Alberta juries in court in Edmonton.

The government was responding to a constitutional challenge brought by lawyers for Jeremy Newborn.

Newborn, an aboriginal man, is on trial for the murder of John Hollar, 29, on an LRT train three years ago. He has pleaded not guilty to second-degree murder.

Newborn's legal team is arguing that a lack of aboriginal people on juries indicates a systemic problem.

They're asking the judge to strike down subsection 4(h) of the Alberta Jury Act, which they say limits the opportunity of indigenous people to be tried by a representative jury.

The section excludes from jury duty anyone currently facing a criminal charge or has been convicted of a criminal offence for which a pardon has not been granted.

Newborn's lawyers say that part of the law disproportionately affects indigenous people who make up 3.8 per cent of Canada's population, but comprise 23.3 per cent of the country's incarceration population.

In arguments before Edmonton Court of Queen's Bench Tuesday, Newborn's lawyer said juries have to act as the conscience of a community and to do that must be representative of the community.

But Crown lawyer David Kamal said the defence failed to produce the necessary evidence to prove the Alberta Jury Act excludes aboriginal people.

Kamal, a constitutional expert, argued permitting people with criminal records to sit on juries could potentially undermine public confidence in the justice system.

The Crown told the court other groups too are excluded from jury duty, such as judges and lawyers and others who work in the justice system.

The exclusions are meant to prevent the perception of bias and are not a violation of the charter, it said.

Alberta is one of nine Canadian jurisdictions with such a policy, meaning it's well in line with the rest of the country, Kamal said.

The vast majority of people who show up for jury selection ask to be excused anyway, he explained.

During the initial jury selection round for the Newborn trial, out of 800 summons sent out, 510 people responded and 314 of those were excused, with another 18 being excluded.

There aren't any more specific details about why those 18 were excluded.

While Kamal acknowledges there are socio-economic issues at play resulting in lower responses to court summons from the aboriginal community, it stresses eliminating the subsection will not fix the broken relationship.

Newborn's trial is scheduled to start next April and Queen's Bench Justice Brian Burrows is promising to hand down a decision on the constitutional arguments by February.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/aboriginal-people-not-deliberately-excluded-from-juries-crown-says-1.3366601>

Jury finds Ottawa man guilty of murdering Cree mother

National News | December 16, 2015 by APTN National News



APTN National News

A jury found an Ottawa man guilty of murdering a Cree mother in August 2010 Wednesday.

Adrian Daou, 24, was convicted of the first-degree murder of Jennifer Stewart, 36, after the jury deliberated for just over two days following a trial that lasted several weeks.

Justice Robert Maranger imposed a mandatory life sentence with no chance of parole for 25 years.

Maranger called Daou's actions the night of Aug. 20, 2010 in Ottawa a "senseless, vicious murder of an innocent human being."

Stewart's parents attended court every day and told the court in their victim impact statement, read by Ottawa police Det. John Monette, that "nobody deserves to die like that."

Court heard that Daou confessed to killing Stewart with an axe.

Police never recovered the murder weapon and there was no physical evidence tying Daou to the murder.

However, the jury watched as he confessed on videotape to Monette Feb. 26, 2013.

Daou's defence lawyers said the confession was questionable and said he suffered from mental illness. The jury had the option of finding Daou not criminally responsible.

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/12/16/jury-finds-ottawa-man-guilty-of-murdering-cree-mother/>

Aboriginal Education & Youth

Ikaarvik Project aims to connect Arctic researchers and Inuit youth

With 60% of people in Nunavut under the age of 30, youth can help connect scientists with communities

By The Early Edition, [CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 09, 2015 12:43 PM PT Last Updated: Dec 09, 2015 12:43 PM PT



It's important for Arctic researchers to connect with communities like the one shown here, Sanikiluaq in Nunavut, say advocates. (Google Canada)

Inuit researchers want Arctic scientists from other parts of Canada to connect with Inuit communities and understand how climate change can affect remote communities.

Arctic scholars are [gathering this week for the ArcticNet conference](#) in Vancouver. Two people from Nunavut are also attending to talk about the Ikaarvik Project, a program that aims to connect communities in Canada's Far North with scientists who want to do research there.

"What we're trying to do is offer a route into the communities that is really functional and really meaningful, but also beneficial to both sides. So it's not only about making the researcher's job easier, it's about creating capacity within the communities to be partners," said Shelly Elverum, Northern Coordinator for the Ikaarvik Project.

The Ikaarvik project received a \$1 million Arctic Inspiration prize at the ArcticNet conference two years ago.

Connecting youth



Mia Otokiak and Shelly Elverum work with the Ikaarvik Project, an initiative that aims to encourage conversation between Arctic researchers and youth in Canada's Far North. (Charlie Cho / CBC)

Many communities in the Arctic have a much higher percentage of young people than the large cities to the south. Elverum, a fellow at the Royal Canadian Geographical Society, says 60 per cent of the population in Nunavut is under the age of 30.

"So it's really necessary to get that generation involved."

Elverum works with Mia Otokiak, the youth coordinator for the Ikaarvik Project, to help youth act like catalysts for their communities. Some people in the community don't understand what scientists do in the north, and others think researchers are not interested in Inuit communities at all. Otokiak says that has to change.

"I think the biggest thing for the communities to see is that the researchers just want to really engage with the communities, but they don't know how to."

Working as partners

Elverum says they are trying to help both scientists and northern communities find a new perspective on working together.

"It's sort of a new way of thinking about things -- how different could science be if it's actually responding to the needs of communities."

She emphasized the importance of the north-south partnership, especially on issue of climate change.

"If the north doesn't have support in the south, nothing's going to change."

For many in Canada's south, the Arctic is an exotic and mysterious place. But when people actually visit to see for themselves, it can be very rewarding, says Elverum.

"One of the greatest joys in life is to watch people's minds get blown."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/ikaarvik-project-arctic-youth-1.3357647>

Saskatoon Cree teacher shortlisted for \$1M global award

Belinda Daniels is the only Canadian teacher up for the Global Teacher Prize worth \$1 million

[CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 10, 2015 11:39 AM CT Last Updated: Dec 10, 2015 11:39 AM CT



Saskatoon Cree teacher Belinda Daniels. (Belinda Daniels/Submitted to CBC)

A Saskatoon Cree teacher has been shortlisted for a global award worth \$1 million.

Belinda Daniels is the only Canadian teacher up for the Global Teacher Prize awarded by the Varkey Foundation.

"I was pretty ecstatic, overwhelmed, and it was exciting," Daniels said on CBC's *Saskatoon Morning*.

I wanted to share that feeling of connectedness with my students. - *Belinda Daniels, teacher*

Daniels is from Sturgeon Lake First Nation and was first inspired to teach when she was an administrative assistant at a local high school.

She has been teaching for 15 years and said she learned that a good educator is someone who brings their passion and a sense of belonging into the classroom.

"(I) was inspired to teach the Cree language," Belinda explained. "Since then I have been self-taught and I have been taking extra classes. I created a Cree language summer camp around 11 years ago to reclaim my language, which really awakened my own identity and my own purpose. I wanted to share that feeling of connectedness with my students."

The Global Teacher Prize is a \$1 million award that is given to an "exceptional teacher who has made an outstanding contribution to the profession," according to the Varkey Foundation website. Daniels is one of 50 teachers who made the shortlist from 8,000 nominees all over the world. The winner will be announced in March.

Daniels said, if she wins, she would invest the money in indigenous languages and education, creating a bottom up initiative that is a collective process and taps into local indigenous scholars.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/saskatoon-cree-teacher-global-award-belinda-daniels-1.3359107>

Yukon NDP calls for more First Nations teachers

Territorial government must do more to recruit aboriginal teachers, MLA Jim Tredger says

[CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 10, 2015 8:00 AM CT Last Updated: Dec 10, 2015 8:00 AM CT



NDP MLA Jim Tredger (left) believes efforts to recruit more First Nations teachers to Yukon schools have 'stagnated'. (Philippe Morin/CBC)

Yukon's opposition NDP is pushing the government to increase the number of First Nations educators in the territory's schools.

"Yukon First Nations continue to be under-represented in our classrooms," said MLA Jim Tredger in the legislature on Wednesday. He said the government's staffing protocols are not working.

"The ratio of First Nations to non-First Nations teachers has remained the same for several years now," Tredger said.

Tredger said when the territory's original Education Act was being crafted, there was general agreement that the number of First Nations teachers should be proportional to the number of First Nations people in the territory. That would mean about a quarter of all Yukon teachers would be aboriginal, Tredger said.

Tredger said initial efforts to recruit First Nations teachers were successful, but he fears they've "stagnated".



'We can't force these graduates to come to the education department,' said Yukon Education Minister Doug Graham. (Mike Rudyk/CBC)

Education Minister Doug Graham said there's only so much the government can do. He said the Yukon Native Teacher Education Program was established at Yukon College to address the issue, but graduates are not always pursuing careers in teaching.

"Unfortunately, we can't force these graduates to come to the education department," Graham said.

"We will continue mentoring, we will continue offering programs, and we'll continue the staffing protocol that provides First Nations people with priority hiring, particularly in our rural schools."

Graham said the government is working with school councils and the First Nations Education Commission to attract more aboriginal educators to Yukon schools.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/yukon-ndp-first-nations-teachers-1.3358251>

First Nations schools could see federal funding double, leader says

[Betty Ann Adam, Saskatoon StarPhoenix](#)

Published on: December 11, 2015 | Last Updated: December 11, 2015 8:04 PM CST



Saskatoon Tribal Council Chief Felix Thomas believes a funding gap between schools on and off First Nations will close. Gord Waldner / Saskatoon StarPhoenix

Funding for First Nations schools could more than double if the federal government's promise, repeated this week before the Assembly of First Nations, is fulfilled, says the chief of the Saskatoon Tribal Council.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's promise to lift the two per cent funding cap for First Nations education, followed by a promise to fully implement the to Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, leads Felix Thomas to infer a promise to close the funding gap between schools on and off First Nations.

"My expectation is we would look for parity in funding as a first step," he said.

Federally funded on-reserve schools receive about 39 per cent less per child than provincially funded off-reserve schools, a 2013 study commissioned by the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) found.

The study, which showed how much on-reserve schools in the North Battleford area would receive if they were funded for all education services and programs at the same per-pupil allocation as provincial school divisions, found that instead of \$7,231 per pupil, the on-reserve schools would receive \$11,894 in the mostly-rural Living Sky division.

The gap was considerably greater when on-reserve funding is compared to funding for the French language school system, Conseil des écoles fransaskoises, which receives \$16,665 per student to provide education to preserve their language and culture, as guaranteed in the constitution.

“The French language and culture receives unique support across the country from both levels of government,” the report stated.

First Nations need money to offer language immersion programs too, Thomas said.

“That’s vitally important, not only to maintaining language, but identity and pride in who we are. Philosophically nobody can argue with that, but it comes at a cost,” he said.

It will require an investment in language instructors and the creation of curricula, which French programs have had decades to develop, he noted.

The Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre used to develop culturally informed teaching materials, but it, like the representative organizations, endured massive funding cuts under the Conservative government, reducing their ability to generate teaching resources, he said.

There are three different indigenous languages among the Saskatoon Tribal Council First Nations and about 10 throughout the province, Thomas said.

The TRC called on Ottawa to eliminate the discrepancy in federal education funding for First Nations children being educated on reserves, to protect the right to aboriginal languages, and to develop culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for aboriginal families.

It also called for funding to end the backlog of funding for First Nations students seeking post-secondary education.

The UN declaration says indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, develop and transmit to future generations their histories and languages, to provide education in their own languages, and to receive all levels and forms of education without discrimination.

Direct Link: <http://thestarphoenix.com/news/local-news/first-nations-schools-could-see-federal-funding-double-leader-says>

Child advocacy group explores high number of Aboriginal children in care

by [Crystal Laderas](#)

Posted Dec 13, 2015 5:32 pm MST

A new report will examine why Aboriginal children make up the majority of kids in the care of the province.

According to the Office of the Child Youth Advocate Alberta (OCYA), 69 per cent of the province's wards are Aboriginal, a population that makes up only nine per cent of Alberta's youth.

Del Graff is with the OCYA, which just finished gathering information from former and current wards of the government through online surveys. He says most child intervention cases are about calls for neglect, but they're handled in ways similar to abuse cases.

"I do know the government is trying to address that issue in terms of putting together a different model of practice that enables some differentiation, but we need to see more action on the part of government," Graff said.

OCYA is collecting more information from caregivers and others involved in the province's child intervention program before drafting its report.

The goal is to improve the intervention system for Aboriginal families and stakeholders who support young people.

Direct Link: <http://www.660news.com/2015/12/13/child-advocacy-group-explores-high-number-of-aboriginal-children-in-care/>

First Nations Leadership Council writes to Premier Christy Clark objecting to Bob Plecas recommendations

by Staff on December 14th, 2015 at 7:31 PM



B.C.'s representative for children and youth, Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, has received support from the First Nations Summit, the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, and the regional chief of the Assembly of First Nations. PETER MOTHE

The top-ranking aboriginal leaders in B.C. have written an open letter to Premier Christy Clark, claiming that former civil servant Bob Plecas has authored a "biased survey of child welfare and politics". You can read the letter below.

Dear Premier Clark,

Mr. Plecas has written a report called *Decision Time* as a special independent advisor to you and the Minister for Children and Families. Mr. Plecas was originally hired to review the J.P. case but his mandate was expanded to include an "interim report on the comparative analysis of applicable legislation, policy, standards and practice and recommendations for the improvement of Ministry, and other, systemic processes".

Unfortunately, Mr. Plecas presents a wide-ranging, biased survey of child welfare and politics, including a unilateral public assessment of the value of independent oversight and the performance of the current Representative for Children and Youth. We find this attack on this valued oversight role to be deeply offensive and inappropriate. Let us be clear in stating that we fully support the important work of the Representative for Children and Youth.

The report references Grand Chief Edward John being brought on "to help find ways to address the over-representation of Aboriginal children in care". We find this to be an attempt by Mr. Plecas to minimize a need to consult with First Nations' on these important issues by offloading and mischaracterizing Grand Chief Edward John's important role as Special Advisor.

We must point out that Grand Chief John has our support in his role as a Special Advisor to the Ministry of Children and Families and his mandate to specifically:

- Provide a focused role on creating permanency for Aboriginal children in care, particularly those in care through continuing custody orders (in care until reaching the age of majority);
- After the release of the Council of the Federation report, assign follow-up for British Columbia (encourage national-level leadership and facilitate provincial level discussions) and;
- As necessary, assist the MCFD Minister in developing advice to cabinet members on these areas.

We take great offense at Mr. Plecas' cavalier observation that the deaths and serious injuries to children known to the MCFD "occur rarely." From July 2007 to September 2015 there have been 2981 instances of critical injuries and deaths. To be clear, the MCFD is aware of 814 deaths and 2077 critical injuries in the last eight years. For the current fiscal year of 2015-2016, there are 380 critical injury reports and 90 deaths of children in care. We need to bring closure and honour the grieving families.

Mr. Plecas confirms what the Representative has already reported on extensively, that the MCFD budget has a shortfall of at least \$100 million over the past number of years. We urge you to make immediate financial investments. More importantly though, we urge you to work with us to ensure those investments actually help First Nations children and youth who are the mainstay of the children in need in BC.

We have asked the Representative to convene a meeting among herself, the First Nations Leadership Council, the First Nations Health Council and your Deputies to discuss the state of child welfare and how to move forward in the most appropriate manner.

We will also be writing to the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly to indicate that we hope the utterly unfair review of the performance of the Representative can be withdrawn fully and that should such a review be conducted, it should be done in the proper forum, before the Standing Committee on Children and Youth that the Representative has worked closely with for 9 years and has appeared before in excess of 30 times.

What is certain is that significant and real change is required, as well as direct investments to First Nations communities to support First Nations' children and families. Unfortunately, the Plecas Report falls significantly short and appears to be an attempt to discredit the important work of a respected First Nations individual and office holder. This report represents a wasted opportunity to effect the positive change so desperately needed in BC.

Sincerely,

FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

On behalf of the FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT:

Grand Chief Edward John
Cheryl Casimer
Robert Phillips

On behalf of the UNION OF BC INDIAN CHIEFS:

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip
Chief Bob Chamberlin
Chief Judy Wilson

On behalf of the BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS:

Regional Chief Shane Gottfriedson

CC: Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, Representative for Children and Youth

Grand Chief Doug Kelly, First Nations Health Council
Hon. Stephanie Cadieux, Ministry of Children and Family Development

Direct Link: <http://www.straight.com/news/597381/first-nations-leadership-council-writes-premier-christy-clark-objecting-bob-plecas>

Principals seen as key to turning around troubled First Nations schools

Pilot project by University of Toronto's faculty of education offers a rare lifeline to these often isolated school leaders, so they can begin educational revival deemed crucial for aboriginal youth by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.



Former prime minister Paul Martin, shown with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, said calls education the "foundation of reconciliation."

By: Louise Brown GTA, Published on Wed Dec 16 2015

They're the key to turning around some of the most troubled schools in Canada, yet principals on First Nations reserves juggle everything from payroll, busing and blistering staff burnout to the parent distrust born of residential schools — all with little training or help.

Now a pilot project by the University of Toronto's faculty of education offers a rare lifeline to these often isolated school leaders, so they can begin the educational revival deemed crucial for aboriginal youth by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Developed in partnership with former prime minister Paul Martin's Aboriginal Education Initiative, the unusual First Nations Principals Course that began in September will provide 200 hours of training — some in person, much of it online — designed to raise the educational bar on everything from teachers' skills to parental involvement.

"We're flying without a net and it can be overwhelming, but this program offers a network of support and creative ideas for thinking outside the box," says Principal Cathy Hampshire of Hillside Public School in Kettle and Stony Point First Nation on Lake Huron near Sarnia.

Unlike public schools funded by the provinces, schools on First Nations reserves are run by the federal government, which provides less per-student funding and leaves administration to the local band council.

While she is not aboriginal, Hampshire has worked more than 30 years as a principal on First Nations reserves and was not only part of an advisory team that helped develop the course, but made several short how-to films to show principals tips on everything from setting up student records to keeping staff accountable and reaching out to parents.

Some 20 principals across the country have been taking part in the pilot project since September and already appear to be doing "marvelously well," said Martin in an interview Tuesday.

"As the principal goes, so goes the school, and these principals have no ministry of education or school board for support and are often 100 miles away from the next school," said Martin. He noted many of their students are the sons and daughters and grandsons and granddaughters of residential school survivors "and much of that trauma has been transmitted down the generations. This program gives principals an immense range of instruments to support them."

Unlike principals in provincially funded public schools, many principals on federal reserves have had little or no training before getting the job, said course co-leader Jean-Paul Restoule, a professor at U of T's Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE).

"If our goal is ultimately to try to improve student achievement, the single best way to do that is to support educational leaders," said Restoule. "Being principal can be a very lonely position and this program offers (online) discussion forums too and they're already jumping right in."

He noted the program aims to help teachers learn to develop better teaching skills among staff and work with parents more effectively and maybe work with the band council to get resources they may need to run the school.

Said Martin: “Education is the foundation of reconciliation and this is exactly what this course addresses. Residential schools were a tragic misuse of education, but we can make education the remedy.”

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2015/12/16/principals-seen-as-key-to-turning-around-troubled-first-nations-schools.html>

First Nations should get responsibility for aboriginal youth in care, says Teegee

MARK NIELSEN / PRINCE GEORGE CITIZEN
DECEMBER 15, 2015 09:44 PM



Mary Teegee, centre, speaks to the media after family members of missing women and RCMP E-Pana investigators met for an update into the investigation on Oct. 17, 2012. - Brent Braaten, Photographer

Responsibility for aboriginal youth in care should be turned over to First Nations social agencies as part of any overhaul of the Ministry of Children and Families, says Carrier Sekani Family Services executive director Mary Teegee.

Teegee pointed to the transfer of authority for aboriginal health in B.C. from the federal government to the First Nations Health Authority as an example of how it can proceed.

"We should be doing that same work within child welfare," Teegee said. "We started that work, it's just that there is no longer funding for it, it was cut down a couple of years ago."

Teegee's comments were made in light of the release Monday of former deputy minister Bob Plecas' review of the Ministry of Children and Families.

Plecas recommended the provincial government pursue a strategic four-year plan that would include a "rethink of the management model" for MCFD.

Plecas also called for a \$50-million increase to the ministry's budget to hire 120 more full-time staff in the coming year, followed by fixed increases over the next four years to restore diminished funding.

Additionally, Plecas said an indigenous or aboriginal person should be hired as an assistant deputy minister as part of strengthening the office of the child welfare director.

Teegee said keeping aboriginal children with their biological parents if at all possible needs to be emphasized and pointed to a one-year pilot program Carrier Sekani oversaw as an example of an approach that works.

The program provided six weeks of round-the-clock wrap-around support for "intensive family preservation."

"[In the past year], we have saved over 20 families that have not had their children removed because we provided that support," Teegee said. "We know that works, yet again, we're not funded to do that."

Regardless of their culture, children need to know who they are and where they come from, Teegee said.

"Later in life, they will have better outcomes if they have a strong sense of self and a strong sense of identity," Teegee said.

She also said the province needs to broaden its focus to account for youth no longer in state care.

"If you look at the outcomes for former children in care, the ones that have aged out, they have the highest rates of suicide, they're usually living in abject poverty, they're usually sexually exploited," Teegee said.

"They are the most vulnerable of our society, so obviously something is not working within the system."

In one high-profile case, Carley Fraser committed suicide in 2014, a day after she turned 19 and was no longer in care. Despite her mother's demands, the ministry refused to review the case, but recent legislation has changed B.C.'s Agreement with Youths to provide \$5 million in support to youths aged 19 to 24 as they transition to adulthood.

Because of restricted funding, Teegee noted social workers employed by First Nations agencies are not compensated as well as an MCFD social worker.

Teegee was critical of Plecas' suggestion that children and youth representative Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond should focus on advocacy while the ministry takes over responsibility for oversight.

"That really is not a good idea considering that we definitely need an independent body," Teegee said.

- See more at: <http://www.princegeorgecitizen.com/news/local-news/first-nations-should-get-responsibility-for-aboriginal-youth-in-care-says-teegee-1.2133710#sthash.fh8RAMeR.dpuf>

Two Canadian universities make indigenous studies a requirement



Wab Kinew of the University of Winnipeg discusses the course and what it means for the Indigenous community.

CTVNews.ca Staff

Published Thursday, December 17, 2015 9:07AM EST

Starting next fall, every undergraduate student at the University of Winnipeg and Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ont., will be required to take a course in indigenous studies.

It's a plan that university administrators hope will allow every student to learn the basics of the traditions, history, and modern-day issues of First Nations, Metis and Inuit people.

Wab Kinew, the associate vice-president of Indigenous Affairs at University of Winnipeg, says it was students who initiated the new requirement. There had been a few incidents of racism on campus and the student association met with the aboriginal student council to brainstorm solutions.

PHOTOS



Wab Kinew, associate vice-president of Indigenous Affairs at University of Winnipeg, speaks to Canada AM on Thursday, Dec. 17, 2015.

“And what they came up with was that education could play a role in fighting racism – education toward combating ignorance,” Kinew told CTV’s Canada AM from Winnipeg Thursday.

There’s been a lot of positive reaction to the announced change, he said, especially since it comes so soon after the release of the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission report](#).

“A lot of people are recognizing that learning about indigenous people is crucial to be an active and engaged citizen in our country,” he said.

There has also been a certain amount of “push-back,” Kinew conceded, but he said that has to do with some students mistakenly believing that the new rules will require all students to take the same course. That’s not how it will work, he said.

“Rather, we’re saying there’s a list of dozens of courses across many different departments,” and students can choose one that fits with their degree program or that just piques their curiosity.

Since the University of Manitoba announced the new requirement, administrators at other universities have been contacting University of Manitoba leaders to find out how they can implement a similar mandate.

Kinew says he hopes the idea will spread even further, so that all teachers, lawyers, doctors and public sector workers are encouraged to also learn the basics of indigenous history and contemporary issues.

“Everybody working in this country should have at least a basic understanding of these issues so that they can engage with them in an informed and meaningful way,” he said.

Direct Link: <http://canadaam.ctvnews.ca/two-canadian-universities-make-indigenous-studies-a-requirement-1.2704100>

B.C. children's ministry accused of racism by First Nations woman

Human rights complaint says social worker confronted anonymous caller in front of angry father

By Jason Proctor, [CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 17, 2015 12:33 PM PT Last Updated: Dec 17, 2015 12:33 PM PT



The B.C. Human Rights Tribunal has refused to dismiss a complaint from a First Nations woman who claims the children's ministry discriminated against her.

The B.C. Human Rights Tribunal has refused to dismiss **a complaint from a First Nations woman** who claims a social worker told her all aboriginal people have "serious alcohol and substance abuse problems."

The woman, whose name is withheld, claims the comments were made to her when she called the B.C. Ministry of Children and Family Development to report a child allegedly riding on a neighbour's motorcycle without a helmet.

'Seen as malicious'

According to the complaint, a social worker responded to the call by first visiting the father and then approaching the woman in view of the man she had repeatedly complained about.

She claims she was told her complaints "were starting to be seen as malicious."

"I am mandated under law to report ALL suspected cases of child abuse and for him to say that my calls were unfounded or malicious infuriates me to no end," the woman wrote in her human rights complaint.

She claims a doctor also complained about the man's behaviour, but was not interviewed in the same way because she was white: "It seems that if I were white that my word would have been golden."

The case comes at a **critical time for relations** between the children's ministry and First Nations. The ministry came under heavy fire for **a report released this week** which has been accused of ignoring the concerns of First Nations leaders.

Aboriginal children make up 60.6 per cent of the 7,200 children in care in B.C.

The tribunal allowed the woman's complaint to go ahead despite inconsistencies in her version of events.

She said she made her initial call on June 24, 2014, and spoke with a particular social worker, SW. But an internal ministry investigation exonerated SW, who said he did not take the initial call.

SW has over 25 years of experience as a frontline child protection worker and claims his reputation in the community is untarnished; the woman claimed that "any parent that has had their child removed by child protection, whether aboriginal or not, rarely feels thankful or respectful of child protection workers."

Father 'scared the hell out of me'

But SW was the social worker who went to confront the father on June 29. He took an RCMP officer with him because "he suspected that the father might get upset by his visit, as the father had previously expressed anger and frustration about (the woman's) continuing reports about him to MCFD."

After finishing the conversation with the father, SW crossed the road to speak with the woman, who was standing outside. He acknowledges telling her that her continuing reports bordered on malicious.

The woman claims that when she asked the RCMP officer why he was present, he stated that he was there to protect SW. She claims the father has a criminal record for drugs, violence and other offences.

"(The woman) says that the father confronted her one hour later and 'scared the hell out of me' with threats of violence." the tribunal decision says.

The woman identifies herself as a social justice advocate; she claims the case has "caused her great grief."

Lack of jurisdiction?

The ministry tried to argue that the tribunal lacks jurisdiction in the case because the woman is not a recipient of MCFD services.

But tribunal member Catherine McCreary noted the legislation requires the public to report suspected child abuse and that the alleged human rights violation occurred in that context.

McCreary dismissed the complaint against SW, but found that it would be unfair to dismiss her complaint against the ministry because she was wrong about the person who initially took the call.

She has given the ministry until the end of January to file a further application to dismiss.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/first-nations-human-rights-complaint-1.3369956>

Critics decry B.C. adviser on aboriginal child welfare in wake of Plecas report

WENDY STUECK

VANCOUVER — The Globe and Mail

Published Wednesday, Dec. 16, 2015 10:35PM EST

Last updated Wednesday, Dec. 16, 2015 10:36PM EST

First Nations leader Ed John is facing calls to resign from his role as adviser on aboriginal child welfare to the British Columbia government amid the fallout from a review that recommended the province phase out its independent children's watchdog.

The suggestion that Mr. John step down reflects tension between First Nations groups and B.C.'s children's ministry, which has for years grappled with the high numbers of aboriginal children in care.

Plecas Review Report Part One

B.C. has about 8,000 kids in government care, and about 50 per cent of them are aboriginal – even though indigenous people make up only about 4.5 per cent of the population.

In September, the province named Mr. John a senior adviser on aboriginal child welfare for a six-month term. He is also on the executive of the First Nations Summit, a group set up to pursue treaty negotiations in B.C.

“While there is a great deal of respect for Grand Chief Ed John, he should consider stepping away from his role as advisor to the [Ministry of Children and Family Development],” Cheam First Nation Chief Ernie Crey said Wednesday on his Facebook page.

“The Plecas report and its recommendations constitute a danger to the many thousands of Aboriginal children in B.C. government care. The Grand Chief should not let his good name be sullied by the cynical manoeuvrings of the [Liberal Premier Christy] Clark government,” Mr. Crey added.

Mr. Crey was referring to a report released this week on B.C.’s child-welfare system written by former civil servant Bob Plecas.

The report suggested, among other things, folding the office of B.C.’s Representative for Children and Youth into the ministry.

That independent position, created in 2006 after an investigation into the children’s ministry, is held by Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, who has issued reports that have harshly criticized the ministry, including some that have focused on aboriginal children.

To Mr. Crey, the suggestion could herald an unwelcome shift in how the province approaches aboriginal child-care issues and puts Mr. John in an untenable position.

“He can ill afford to have his name, in any respect, associated with Mr. Plecas and his report and its recommendations,” Mr. Crey said in an interview.

“If he wants to go to work for the ministry, great. But if he wants to continue to be a voice and advocate for the aboriginal community, then the aboriginal community will need him 100 per cent.”

Mr. John was out of town and not immediately available for comment.

Mr. John signed a Dec. 14 letter to Ms. Clark from the First Nations Leadership Council – which includes the First Nations Summit – that called the Plecas report “a wasted opportunity to effect the positive change so desperately needed in B.C.”

First Nations Health Council chairman Doug Kelly echoed Mr. Crey’s concerns, saying Mr. John has been caught in a clash between First Nations’ interests and the province over how best to reduce the number of aboriginal children in government care.

“He [Mr. John] is in a battle, and he’s trying to play on both sides of the battlefield,” Mr. Kelly said. “He is on the payroll of the First Nations Summit. He’s also on the payroll of the [ministry] for that contract. We’re engaged in conflict. ... He can’t play on both sides.”

Cheryl Casimer, also an executive of the First Nations Summit, rejected the suggestion that Mr. John was in a conflict, saying Mr. Plecas's report does not affect his mandate.

"The scope of work that Grand Chief Ed John is doing is bigger than a report commissioned from an ex-deputy minister," Ms. Casimer said, adding that Mr. John was unavailable for comment because he was in a First Nations community to talk about child-welfare concerns.

"If people are going to be saying he is in a conflict, that conversation should have taken place when Grand Chief Ed John presented his appointment to the [the First Nations Summit]," Ms. Casimer said. "That was the time for a conversation and discussion around it."

Mr. John's appointment coincides with increasing calls to stem the flow of aboriginal children into state care. In its final report, tabled this month, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which looked at the legacy of Canada's residential school system, began its list of calls to action with steps related to child welfare.

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/critics-decry-bc-adviser-on-aboriginal-child-welfare-in-wake-of-plecas-report/article27799126/>

Five things to know about the Gordon Oakes Redbear Student Centre

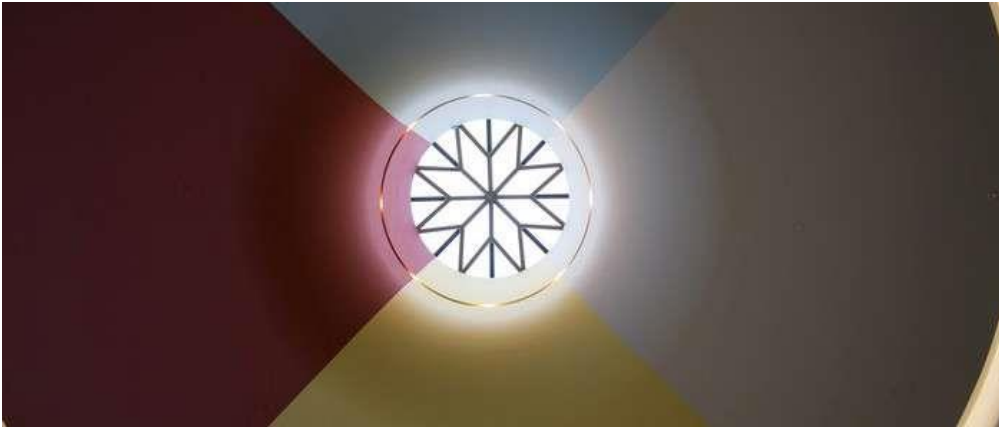
BETTY ANN ADAM, SASKATOON STARPHOENIX

More from Betty Ann Adam, Saskatoon StarPhoenix

Published on: December 15, 2015 | Last Updated: December 15, 2015 10:51 PM CST



The Gordon Oakes Redbear Student Centre on the University of Saskatchewan campus is dedicated to aboriginal student achievement and will be the home of aboriginal student leadership and an intercultural gathering place for everyone on campus, says Graeme Joseph, team leader of First Nations, Metis and Inuit student success.



1

Inside the main hall, the ceiling has the colours of the medicine wheel, as chosen by members of the family of the late Gordon Oakes. It has a special ventilation system that draws up smoke from smudging and pipe ceremonies to a teepee-like opening and vents it to the four directions. Oakes was an influential elder from the Nekaneet First Nation who saw the treaty relationship between indigenous peoples and settlers as a partnership symbolized by a team of two horses working together, Joseph said.



2

The new building is located between the Murray Library, the Arts tower and the Health Sciences Building. In the tunnel from the Health Sciences Building to the Arts Building is an orange cylinder directly beneath the main hall of the Gordon Oakes Redbear Centre. It contains earth excavated from the site during construction of the building. It was installed upon instruction of elders who said traditional ceremonies that will be performed in the main hall should be done upon the earth.



3

An art installation in the entryway includes wood from a cross section of an elm tree that had to be removed in advance of construction of the 1,880 square metre facility, which adheres to LEEDS energy and environmental design principles. The centre can accommodate groups of up to 275 people, for gatherings of indigenous scholars, artists and knowledge keepers with students and faculty. Such holistic learning opportunities will help the scholars and leaders of the future, Joseph said.



4

Elders Veronica and William Duquette blessed the space Tuesday in a traditional ceremony. They said they hope their grandchildren and great grandchildren will attend the university. This year, more than 2,200 indigenous students make up about 11 per cent of the U of S student population. Indigenous peoples now comprise about 15 per cent of the Saskatchewan population and the national census anticipates they will make up 20 per cent by 2036. “The centre provides an important platform to meet student needs now and into the future,” Joseph said. The centre is part of a larger community of support on campus for aboriginal students, including the Trish Monture Centre for Student Success located in the Arts building, the Urban Native Teacher Program and Indian Teacher Education Program and with supports in nursing, medicine and engineering.



5

The circular building, with its striking “fin wall” that mimics a blanket sheltering the structure, was designed by Blackfoot and Metis architect Douglas Cardinal, who is known for the Museum of Civilization in Gatineau, Quebec, the First Nations University in Regina and Wanuskewin Heritage Park in Saskatoon. The new building’s unusual shape, which is otherwise seen only in the university’s observatory and agriculture silos, has cultural significance to indigenous people, said Colin Tennent, Associate Vice-President and University Architect. It utilizes the Manitoba Tyndall stone, inside and out, which is featured in most of the structures on campus.

Direct Link: <http://thestarphoenix.com/news/saskatchewan/five-things-to-know-about-the-gordon-oakes-redbear-student-centre>

Aboriginal Health

Unclaimed medications are costing Nunavut, says report on pharmacy services

Study finds some patients have never met or spoken to their pharmacist

By Sima Sahar Zerehi, [CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 10, 2015 4:30 AM CT Last Updated: Dec 10, 2015 7:13 AM CT



A staffer inside the pharmacy at the Qikiqtani General Hospital in Iqaluit. A recent study found that Nunavut faces major problems in the way that pharmaceuticals are distributed, managed and dispensed. (Government of Nunavut)

Nunavut faces major problems in the way that pharmaceuticals are distributed, managed and dispensed, according to a new study published in the *Journal of Pharmaceutical Policy and Practice*.

The study looked at how pharmacy services are delivered in a territory that grapples with problems including a shortage of pharmacists, weather-related delays, and language and cultural barriers between health care providers and the people they serve.

In Nunavut, 85 per cent of the population are Inuit beneficiaries who receive their pharmaceuticals at no charge through federal or territorial funding. But medications are often not getting into the hands of patients.



'Some participants I had spoken to had never met their pharmacist,' says the study's author. (iStock)

"There's an issue regarding a number of unclaimed medications that are not being picked up at the community health centres," said one of the study's authors Sandra Romain, an anthropology graduate student with the University of Toronto.

She said there are many reasons why medication isn't being picked up, including "not being aware of the reasoning for the medication, difficulties trying to contact the patient, not having a current address and a patient not coming back."

Not only does that compromise patients' well-being, unclaimed medications are also costly.

"Ultimately they're returned and destroyed, which is a huge loss," said Romain.

No one to talk to about side effects

Geographically, Nunavut is Canada's largest territory or province, yet there are only five pharmacies in the region: two in Iqaluit, two in Rankin Inlet and one in Cambridge Bay. Many people Romain spoke to said they would like to have access to a local pharmacist.

"Some participants I had spoken to had never met their pharmacist, had never spoken to their pharmacist," she said.

"They really would like to have a qualified individual residing in the community that they have discussions with about pharmacy issues, side effects, adverse drug events."



The study also recommends translating prescription labels into Inuit languages, something Nunavut's languages commissioner has also called for. (iStock)

In the hamlets that don't have a resident pharmacist, most people rely on health centre staff for pharmaceutical services — often nurses from outside the territory who do not speak Inuktitut. Romain said it's difficult for patients to learn about their medication when the information is not in a language they understand.

Plans are underway to try and translate "everything from labels on prescription bottles, up to information on side effects" into Inuit languages, said Romain.

She said more study is needed to investigate why the pharmaceutical system is failing to meet patient needs in Nunavut and to find out how Nunavummiut feel about the industry.

Communication barrier

"Definitely there is a communication barrier," said Donna Mulvey, a pharmacist for Nunavut's Department of Health.



'There is a shortage of pharmacists and that's nationwide,' says Donna Mulvey, the pharmacist for Nunavut's department of health who has been on the job for only three months. (Radio-Canada)

Mulvey said the department is working on ensuring that pharmacies print prescription labels in Inuit languages — [something for which Nunavut's language commissioner recently called.](#)

Many people in Nunavut can only communicate directly with a pharmacist by phone, and Mulvey said health centre staff have been instructed to provide access to a phone for any patient who wants to speak to a pharmacist.

"We're basically open to ideas and we're always looking at ways to improve our communication and our care of patients in any way that we can," said Mulvey.

Mulvey, who has only been on the job for three months, recognizes the staff shortage as well.

"At the moment I'm the only pharmacist on staff with the Government of Nunavut," she said.

"There is a shortage of pharmacists and that's nationwide."

She's trying to fix that by recruiting at least one other pharmacist to work in the territory.

Mulvey also said, to address weather-related delays, the territory maintains a higher inventory level than other jurisdictions in Canada, with each health centre being stocked with a two-week supply of essential medication.

"Pain medication, antibiotics — there's a whole variety of medications — it's very difficult to predict what the demand would be, so those are usually the ones that we're scrambling," said Mulvey.

But stockpiling medication also results in a higher volume of expired medication, which comes at a financial cost.

"We do the best that we can to get what these patients need out to them as soon as possible."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/nunavut-pharmacist-pharmacy-report-1.3357761>

Cross Lake calling for inquiry into First Nations health care following death of band member

Tyson McKay, 32, died of a heart attack on June 25 following a 12-minute visit to Cross Lake's nursing station

[CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 11, 2015 11:57 AM CT Last Updated: Dec 11, 2015 11:57 AM CT



Tyson McKay died of a heart attack on June 25, 2015. The Cross Lake man had visited a nursing station operated by Health Canada two days earlier, on June 23, complaining of chest pain. McKay was sent home with antacid and Tylenol following a 12-minute visit.

Manitoba's Cross Lake Band is asking the provincial and federal governments to "wake up" following the death of one of their members.

Tyson McKay was 32 years old when he visited a Health Canada-operated nursing station in his community on June 23, 2015. There, he complained of chest pains.

Staff sent him home with an antacid and Tylenol, saying it was heartburn.

Less than two days later, on June 25, he collapsed of a heart attack and died.

"In the case of the late Tyson McKay, a strong, healthy young man passed on because of the inadequate services run by the nursing station," Chief Cathy Merrick said at a press conference on Friday.

"These are nurses coming into our communities that do not know our communities, that do not know the health of our people or the lack of health of our people. We want the province ... and the federal government to wake up and make sure

they provide these services to us as [they would] any Manitoban or Canadian in this good country."

Merrick is calling for an inquiry into premature and preventable deaths of indigenous people in Manitoba, and says a nursing station alone is not enough to adequately care for Cross Lake's community of 8,400 people.

"Things have to change. The attitude from the province, from the federal government has to change in terms of the health of First Nations people ..." she said.

"Stop passing the buck."

For McKay's mother, Violet McKay, the death of her son was senseless, the result of disregard and oversight, and only too routine in what Councillor Donnie McKay calls the "back-alley medicine" of Cross Lake.

"There's no need of this loss of my son's life," she said on Friday.

"They should have provided an EKG and blood plasma testing. This was negligence to my son's life and to our people, our native people across Canada."

One way to make sense of McKay's death is for it to mark the beginning of change in health care for First Nations people, said McKay's brother, Kelvin McKay.



Kelvin McKay is asking for the provincial and federal governments to treat what he calls his brother's wrongful death as the catalyst to better health care for indigenous communities across Manitoba. (Jeff Stapleton/CBC)

"My mom and I don't want Tyson to just be another statistic but we want him to be the catalyst that fixes the problems of health care in northern Manitoba," he said.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/cross-lake-calling-for-inquiry-into-first-nations-health-care-following-death-of-band-member-1.3361005>

Damen Bell-Holter, First Haida NBA Player, Is Tackling Youth Suicides

Posted: 12/14/2015 3:18 pm EST Updated: 12/14/2015 5:59 pm EST

Chris Taylor, Journalist, Personal-Finance Expert, Runner, Dad



Damen Bell-Holter is used to making headlines, as the first member of the Haida Nation to ever step on an NBA floor.

Now the 25-year-old, 6'9" gentle giant, a former member of the Boston Celtics, is making headlines of a different kind. Bell-Holter, now playing professionally overseas in Finland, is speaking out about the issue of youth suicides, which have plagued First Nations communities.

I sat down with him to find out why the issue touches home for him -- and how he is taking action.

CT: Why has youth suicide become a signature issue for you?

DBH: Growing up in Hydaburg, Alaska, it was a big problem. My home life wasn't ideal, with alcoholism and abuse and all those things. I had cousins who committed suicide. When you're in a town that small, with only around 300 people, almost everyone's family has been through it. It seemed like there was a suicide every year.

CT: What's going on, and why is this happening?

DBH: When you're stuck in small communities, that's all you can see. You don't really have big hopes for the future. I was extremely fortunate because I had basketball as an outlet, which was huge for me. But if you don't have an outlet like that, there's a lot of negativity in these small towns. And all it takes is one moment of weakness and struggle.

CT: What have you decided to do about it?

DBH: Since my sophomore year in college, I've been holding basketball camps for kids every single year. My goal was to give back and work with kids, and since I started doing that, I discovered what a big issue youth suicide is in so many communities. It's a real pattern.

As a result, about 60-70 per cent of the time in my camps doesn't even involve basketball. I talk to kids about domestic violence, about alcohol abuse, about drugs. I've done over

40 of these camps over the last few years, all the way from Alaska, to Haida Gwaii, to mainland B.C., to reservations in lower 48 states like Washington, Oregon and Utah.

CT: Why is it so important for First Nations kids to hear from you?

DBH: Kids in these small communities are really stubborn. If someone from the lower 48 states is talking to them, they just think, 'You don't know what we go through.' But when I come and talk to them about my home-life growing up, then they realize, 'Hey, that's my story too.'

CT: Losing young people in this way is particularly heartbreaking. What would you say to communities going through this?

DBH: The biggest thing is to keep kids involved. Demonstrate a lot of positivity, make sure kids are coming to the gym, keep them active, and show them that you care. Some communities, like Skidegate on Haida Gwaii, are really great at that.

CT: To kids who are in a dark place right now, what would you say to them?

DBH: Your home-life doesn't have to dictate your future and how you feel about yourself. Suicide doesn't have to be an option. Everyone has struggles: I had thoughts of suicide when I was a kid, too. I thought there was nothing better for me out there. But if I had taken my own life, I would have affected my family and my community for generations to come. I wouldn't be here sharing my story right now.

CT: How has the response been to your youth camps?

DBH: The great thing about native communities is that when someone does something special, everyone really comes together to support them. I've had so much support from Haida Gwaii, and towns like Skidegate and Masset, with people telling me they're proud of me. Hopefully I'll have an effect on these kids, even just a few of them, because here I am -- Haida from a small Alaska town of 300 -- and I've seen the highest levels of basketball in the world, doing things I never thought I'd have the opportunity to do.

Direct Link: http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/christopher-taylor-/first-nations-suicides_b_8804434.html

N.W.T. health dept. directs Métis benefits applicant to apply for Indian status

Métis leaders concerned such a policy would force people out of their Métis identity

By Curtis Mandeville, CBC News Posted: Dec 16, 2015 7:31 AM CT Last Updated: Dec 16, 2015 9:06 AM CT

Some Métis leaders are upset with N.W.T.'s health department for directing some people seeking Métis Health Benefits to apply for Indian Status and coverage under the federal government's non-insured health benefits program.

"It's a violation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms," said NWT Métis Nation president Garry Bailey.

CBC obtained a letter that was sent by the health department to an indigenous Métis of the Northwest Territories last year.



Northwest Territory Metis Nation president Garry Bailey says the N.W.T. government should not be asking Métis to apply for Indian status before applying for their Métis Health Benefits.

The letter states that the applicant may qualify for non-insured health benefits as a status Indian and advises the applicant to contact Aboriginal Affairs and apply for Indian status. It says if the applicant is refused treaty status, they can send in a new application for Métis Health Benefits, and attach the refusal letter from Aboriginal Affairs.

The letter has Métis leaders outraged.

Northwest Territory Métis Nation President Garry Bailey said the government should not be asking Métis to apply for Indian status before applying for their Métis Health Benefits.

"You decide what you want to be; if you want to be a treaty person or a Métis person, that's your choice on how you want to be recognized," said Bailey.

His concerns were also shared by North Slave Métis Alliance President Bill Enge.

"The government should not be trying to force march the Métis out of their Métis identity and their rights at the altar of extended medical benefits for the Government of Canada. There's no way that should be going on," said Enge.

"It certainly sounds to me like a misapplication of the policy, and if indeed it is operating in that way... then that practice has to stop and it has to stop now."

Prior to 1985, the Indian Act prevented First Nations women who married non-aboriginal men from keeping their Indian status. In 1985, the Government of Canada introduced

Bill C-31 which gave First Nations women and their children the right to register as status Indians. In 2011, another amendment to the Indian Act was passed, Bill C-3. This allowed for one more generation — the grandchildren — to register for Indian status.

The Métis Alliance president said that if the GNWT is forcing Métis to apply for Indian status before applying for Métis Health Benefits that could be costly to the Métis in the territory.



Bill Enge, president of the North Slave Métis Alliance, says the N.W.T. government 'should not be trying to force march the Métis out of their Métis identity and their rights at the altar of extended medical benefits.' (CBC)

"That would mean a Métis like myself would actually be disqualified from holding the Métis Health Benefits card and I'm the president of the North Slave Métis Alliance," said Enge.

Both Métis leaders say such a policy by the health department will drive down the indigenous Métis population in the territory.

Bailey said he doesn't understand why the territorial government would make Métis apply for Indian status but said he has his own suspicions.

"Of course it's got to boil down to the almighty dollar, I'd imagine," he said.

"You know the GNWT is probably worried about their budget."

The Métis Health Benefits program is territorial; the non-insured health benefits program for First Nations and Inuit is federal.

Bailey said he plans to bring up the issue with the Métis Nation board and talk to the GNWT directly.

The N.W.T. Department of Health and Social Services was unable to provide someone to comment before deadline.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/nwt-metis-health-benefits-1.3366960>

Aboriginal History

Online interactive atlas of Rasmussen's Arctic trek coming soon

"It's being picked up as a diplomatic bridge between Canada and Denmark"

STEVE DUCHARME, December 15, 2015 - 7:05 am



The Kitikmeot Heritage Society's Pamela Gross with artifacts from the Fifth Thule Expedition at the National Museum of Denmark. (PHOTO BY BRENDAN GRIEBEL)



Darren Keith and Pamela Gross work with National Museum of Denmark staff to identify Inuit in historic photos taken during Knud Rasmussen's Fifth Thule Expedition. (PHOTO BY BRENDAN GRIEBEL)



Knud Rasmussen, left, and fellow explorer Peter Freuchen, in the early 1920s. (FILE PHOTO)

The famed 20th century explorer Knud Rasmussen will soon undertake a new journey across the remote communities of Canada's Arctic — but this time it'll be digital.

Eighty-two years after Rasmussen's death, documents and artifacts from his historic Fifth Thule Expedition will be digitized and distributed across Canada's North by way of a comprehensive "cyber-atlas."

The Inuit-Danish explorer Knud Rasmussen became the first European to cross the Arctic from eastern Canada to Alaska on his Fifth Thule Expedition from 1921 to 1924, when he collected enough information about Inuit life to fill a 10-volume journal.

That expedition is widely regarded as one of the most extensive undertakings of its kind.

Many of the artifacts to be included in the atlas — Rasmussen collected approximately 6,000 — will appear for the first time outside Denmark.

For Nunavut, the project marks a giant leap forward in the electronic distribution of history.

The non-profit [Kitikmeot Heritage Society](#), based in Cambridge Bay, is spearheading the project, with technological assistance provided by Carleton University in Ottawa.

The atlas will be a priceless resource to explore Inuit culture before mass settlement in the 1940's ended traditional, semi-nomadic lifestyles.

"At that point [the Inuit] were still living fairly traditional lives, and Inuit tradition was still very intact," said the Kitikmeot Historical Society's executive director, Brendan Greibel.

“[Rasmussen] worked with these people, captured their stories, their songs, their technologies and documented it.”

Using sophisticated software, thousands of names, artifacts and locations will be “tagged” and entered into the database.

The tags will then make it possible for users to trace an item, place or individual’s history across all available documentation and catalogues entered into the atlas.

“It works by this big relational web. If you go to a place, you’ll see the people and everything related to that place... you can navigate this web through your own interests,” explained Greibel.

“You might be reading about an artifact, you’ll be able to see that artifact, look at it three-dimensionally, venture into the person who made it, the stories that person told, or the songs they sang, or the maps they drew and navigate through it as you see fit.”

Even in its early stages, the atlas is proving its worth to some Kitikmeot Heritage Society researchers who are compiling the data.

Community director Pamela Gross used the database to find her grandmother’s great-grandmother, who is mentioned in Rasmussen’s journals.

And another employee believes they’ve found their namesake, although admittedly more research will be needed for confirmation.

“I think it’s going to serve as a linkage,” Gross said of the project’s impact for Nunavut.

“You can see the people, see where they are on the map. We will be able to learn more about specific areas.”

Local histories and knowledge from elders will be added to the atlas later, following a future community tour by the society.

“Sometimes you don’t know what the Inuinnaqtun names mean anymore,” said Gross.

Even now, she said, some elders who witnessed Rasmussen’s historic journey when they were children are still alive.

Early funding for the project has been provide by CIRA, or Canadian Internet Registration Authority, with technical support from Carleton University’s Geomatics and Cartographic Research Centre in Ottawa.

“We’re in fact a pilot project, in terms of making this stuff more widely available to everyone,” said Carleton University professor Fraser Taylor.

Taylor and Carleton staff recently returned from Denmark, along with researchers from the historical society.

Much of the visit was spent going over logistics with Danish museums on how to distribute the digital artifacts in Canada.

In many ways, the electronic infrastructure that will be installed to distribute the atlas will be unprecedented in the territory.

“That’s the next step, to maximize the access speed to communities to make it more accessible,” said Greibel.

[Open source Nunalit server software](#), used in other online northern projects, was used during the early stages of the project.

But the size of the Rasmussen atlas will be charting unknown waters, said Greibel, and the infrastructure will have to be expanded to make the database fully available to Nunavummiut living in communities with limited internet bandwidth.

“The idea is we’re looking at putting servers in most of the communities... so that the information is right in the communities and you can access it quickly.”

Ideally, Greibel envisions communities storing and collecting their own data, rather than having that traditional knowledge stored on southern servers.

If all goes according to plan, the Kitikmeot Heritage Society believes the Rasmussen atlas will represent a new era in Danish and Inuit collaboration — a celebration of shared Arctic roots.

“This has gathered a ton of momentum. When we were over in Denmark, the Canadian ambassador threw a gala for us. It’s being picked up as a diplomatic bridge between Canada and Denmark, and the European Union and North America,” he said.

“It’s turned into a very big project connecting continents and countries.”

Look for the initial distribution of the Knud Rasmussen atlas early in 2016.

The Inuit-Danish explorer Knud Rasmussen became the first European to cross the Arctic from eastern Canada to Alaska, on his Fifth Thule Expedition from 1921 to 1924, when he collected numerous traditional stories and information about Inuit culture.

Direct Link:

[http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674online_interactive_atlas_of_rasmusse
ns_arctic_trek_coming_soon/](http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674online_interactive_atlas_of_rasmusse
ns_arctic_trek_coming_soon/)

Aboriginal Identity & Representation

Performance art challenges public's perception of indigenous stereotypes

Sunday December 13, 2015



In a performance piece, artist Gregg Deal dressed as a Plains Indian outside the Denver Art Museum. (courtesy Gregg Deal)

It's a photo that was making the rounds on social media recently. The image is of a fully dressed Plains Indian — with headdress — sitting in a small roped off area on a busy sidewalk.

A sign outside the velvet rope reads, "Please do not feed the stereotype". The twist? Everything artist Gregg Deal is wearing in the piece was mass produced in China.

It represents "the inept understanding Americans have, or westerners have, to what indigeneity is and what it isn't," Deal said. "So in essence, I'm a stereotype personified."

Ethnographic Zoo is a performance piece created by Deal, the artist-in-residence at the Denver Art Museum. "The real ethnographic zoos that existed in museum in western culture, [were] basically taking brown people and putting them on display in western cities, gawking at, essentially, the 'other'," Deal said.

Reaction to this latest work, Deal said, was mixed. "Some people laughed, some people were annoyed, some people walked by," Deal said. "One woman, which I have on video, got behind me and was pulling on the feathers on the headpiece."

So much of my work is based on indigenous identity, particularly as it exists in popular culture.

- Gregg Deal, artist

With fashion appropriated from indigenous cultures walking the runways and discussion of team mascots filling the airwaves, Deal said art has a unique ability to address the topic in a different way.

"Finding other places and other mediums with which to have these conversations, to have meaningful conversations, in a format and a way that people have open hearts and open minds is probably the biggest key," he said.

For Deal, taking his work to the street offers access to people he wouldn't otherwise interact with.

"Performance art is not confined to a gallery, it's often out in public," he said. "Which is sort of like doing it out in the wild west."



Gregg Deal is artist in residence at the Denver Art Museum. (courtesy Gregg Deal)

Deal, who is Caucasian on his father's side and Pyramid Lake Paiute tribe on his mother's side, recalled being asked questions like how he relates to his white half, whether or not he straightens his hair and whether or not he is "full-blooded Indian."

"To me, art is an expression of life. This is part of the indigenous experience, as a contemporary artist, you can see what I'm looking at and what I'm thinking about as a modern, native man."

Deal said stereotypes like the ones he's exploring in *Ethnographic Zoo* are problematic because they don't allow indigenous people to assert their own identity.

"This is my experience as an indigenous person and I don't think it's unique. But I will continue to share those things because it's part of my life's work."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved/the-connection-between-traditional-fashion-cultural-footwear-and-modern-identity-1.3359711/performance-art-challenges-public-s-perception-of-indigenous-stereotypes-1.3359713>

Tristin Hopper: This is what actual, real-life cultural appropriation looks like

TRISTIN HOPPER | December 17, 2015 2:43 PM ET



Mystic Seaport Whaling Museum/Getty ImagesThe Inuit shaman Qingailisag and a suspiciously similar sweater design from the U.K. firm KTZ.

Just like “safe spaces” and “micro-aggression,” “cultural appropriation” seems to be one of those concerns that Canadians — other than sensitive souls on the country’s university campuses — refuse to take seriously.

Over the summer, non-black U.S. celebrities [were being accused of “cultural appropriation”](#) for braiding their hair into cornrows. Last month, the University of Oxford was accused of “cultural appropriation” for [promoting a dress ball in the theme of a New Orleans Mardi Gras celebration](#).

And, of course, there was the [fiasco at the University of Ottawa](#) where a yoga class was cancelled over fears that it was an offence to the people of Yoga.

Which is why, when actual, real-life, cultural appropriation happened to a family in Nunavut, we could have been forgiven for thinking it was just more trumped-up outrage fetishism.

In its fall collection, the U.K. fashion designer Kokon To Zai (KTZ) unveiled a \$900 sweater that featured an unusual pattern of circles, squares, human forms and — directly over the chest — the shape of two human hands.

When CBC North producer Salome Awa [spotted the sweater](#), she immediately recognized it as an almost exact copy of a garment owned by her great-great grandfather, the shaman Qingailisag.

“This is my great-grandfather’s sacred garment copied right down to the T ... there has to be some kind of mechanism in place to say you just cannot copy aboriginal or Inuit designs and make money off it,” she said.



k-t-z.co.uk Since removed image of the \$900 sweater from the KTZ website.

The sweater's most prominent feature, the hands over the chest, were designed by Qingailisag to protect himself from drowning. As CBC noted, an image of Qingailisag in the garment was published in a compendium of Inuit writing, which may be where KTZ spotted it.

In a world littered with iffy accusations of culture-theft, this is the real deal. A white-guy equivalent would be the Ontario descendant of a United Empire Loyalist waking up to discover their family crest had been slapped on the crotch of a new line of designer panties. Or the son of a war casualty finding that Dad's service portrait was being used in a Chinese ad for shampoo.

The Inuit generally have no problem with people paddling kayaks or wearing parkas, both of which they invented.

And when an Inukshuk was picked as the symbol for the Vancouver 2010 Olympics, the choice got the endorsement of both the government of Nunavut and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the body representing Canada's 55,000 Inuit.

But Kokon To Zai didn't design a sweater that took a few Inuit design cues or made a subtle reference to Arctic culture; all scenarios that, in other circumstance, might have spurred more dubious accusations of "cultural appropriation."

"This is a stolen piece ... there is no way that this fashion designer could have thought of this exact duplicate by himself," Awa told CBC.

Tellingly, KTZ fessed up to the deed almost immediately. It pulled the item from its catalogue, issued a public apology and delivered the requisite lines arguing they were just trying to "celebrate multiculturalism" and that they have all kinds of "ethnic backgrounds" on their staff.

But the lesson of the KTZ fiasco is that before sounding the trumpets of cultural appropriation, consider the following:

Is it a blatant and verifiable copy of something exclusive to that culture? A feathered headdress is obviously a Plains First Nations thing, but dying your hair blonde and braiding it doesn't mean you're ripping off the Scandinavians.

Does it have sacred or religious meaning? Recreationally wearing a yarmulke, for instance, is a bit different than eating a latke.

And is the person raising the complaint part of a group that is directly affected by the alleged culture crime?

If the answer to any or all of the above is yes, you may be looking at a bona fide case of insensitivity to an important element in a recognized culture. If the answer is "no," then think twice before crying wolf about cultural appropriation.

Direct Link: <http://news.nationalpost.com/full-comment/tristin-hopper-this-is-what-actual-real-life-cultural-appropriation-looks-like>

Aboriginal Inequality & Poverty

Help needed for newcomers, aboriginal people

Youth face barriers to jobs: report



By: [Carol Sanders](#)

Posted: 12/10/2015 3:00 AM | Last Modified: 12/10/2015 6:40 AM

The fast-growing newcomer and indigenous youth population Manitoba is relying on for economic growth needs help removing the barriers of racism and poverty, a researcher says.

Their experiences are written about by Keely Ten Fingers in State of the Inner City Report 2015: Drawing on Our Strengths. The graduate student conducted research with young indigenous and newcomer adults in the inner city for the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives' annual report released today.



Alice McKay with one of her four children. McKay says years ago, she experienced a humiliating racist incident on the job.

Her research found more needs to be done to prepare them to successfully transition into good jobs. Mainstream programs aren't helping them because they don't address the root problems of poverty, marginalization and racism.

"Indigenous people and newcomers are very different, but both are more at risk of living below the poverty line," said CCPA director Molly McCracken.

"Many things need to be in place to enable any paid work, not to mention a good job -- things like access to education, child care and transport." She said specialized programs and services can help "these ambitious young people with complex challenges."

Some of those specialized programs have been cut back or eliminated, said Ten Fingers, who wrote Indigenous and Newcomer Young People's Experience of Employment and Unemployment in today's report. Her research is based on focus-group interviews with 45 indigenous and newcomer participants whose average age was 20. Eight were raising children. Eight said they were earning an income. Twenty were in school; 18 said they were unemployed. Nearly half had finished Grade 12, and a quarter were studying to get their Grade 12; a handful were in English-language classes and another handful had post-secondary degrees. The one thing they had in common was racism. As an indigenous woman, Ten Fingers said she wasn't surprised by that.

"My experience of marginalization is that you're not afforded the same opportunities because of incorrect assumptions about your ability, your skills and your intellect and

your ability to contribute," she said. "To see that it is such a significant part of the jobsearch experience and the employment experience was a bit disturbing."

Employers often don't respond to their resumés, and when they do, they're rejected as soon as the employer lays eyes on them, some participants cited in her report said. "I was making cold calls looking for work and scored an appointment. When I got there, (the employer) didn't want to see me," said one.

If they do get hired, they are expected to brush off racist remarks in the workplace -- and worse. Another participant who was the only aboriginal at a cleaning company was singled out and humiliated when cash went missing.

"My boss took it upon herself to search me entirely, going as far as emptying my bra and everything, and my white co-worker didn't receive the same treatment," said the young woman in the report, who was 20 at the time and didn't seek any recourse.

"I found it very degrading, very insulting," said Alice McKay, who is now 29. "My co-worker was standing there watching; the boss was standing there watching," she said in an interview.

'Indigenous people and newcomers are very different, but both are more at risk of living below the poverty line. Many things need to be in place to enable any paid work, not to mention a good job -- things like access to education, child care and transport'

-- Molly McCracken, director of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives

Her boss didn't apologize when the search revealed she wasn't the thief. She quit after that shift, she said.

"It was very discouraging, and it was embarrassing," said McKay, who grew up in foster care and as the only "native" in her French Catholic town was tormented mercilessly in school. "How do you tell future employers when they ask about the different places you've worked and why you left those places? How do you tell potential employers, 'I never went back to work there because they accused me of stealing?'"

Poverty was an issue for getting and keeping a job. Basic needs such as food, housing, access to child care and transportation need to be met.

"When I transition into work, it's always difficult to feed myself... I go to work and I'm hungry for eight hours... You can't focus on the job you're doing," said one young parent. For another, it was the lack of affordable child care. "Where are you going to leave your child? I don't want to risk CFS being called in."

Republished from the Winnipeg Free Press print edition December 10, 2015 A4

Direct Link: <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/help-needed-for-newcomers--aboriginals-361381331.html>

N.S. First Nations hail welfare decision

ERIN POTTIE CAPE BRETON BUREAU

Published December 10, 2015 - 7:25pm

Ottawa won't impose Tories' rate changes, Mi'kmaq say



Eskasoni Chief Leroy Denny is one of the Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq leaders breathing a sigh of relief after Carolyn Bennett, the federal minister of indigenous and northern affairs, said the department will not implement welfare program changes the Harper government planned. (STEVE WADDEN)

SYDNEY — Nova Scotia's Mi'kmaq leaders say they are breathing a sigh of relief after hearing that the federal government has halted forthcoming changes to First Nations social assistance rates.

Aboriginal leaders say Carolyn Bennett, the federal minister of indigenous and northern affairs, told them Thursday she doesn't intend to enforce program changes scheduled to occur April 1.

Under the former Harper Conservative government, plans were forged to align First Nation welfare rates to those of their non-native counterparts.

"She recognized that we need (to) study and see where there are gaps and differences and find a permanent solution," said Leroy Denny, chief of the Eskasoni First Nation who was part of a delegation that travelled to Ottawa.

"I thank all chiefs and Atlantic MPs for their work on this in addressing our (concerns), which was a top priority."

Denny said although Bennett made her position clear, aboriginal chiefs are still waiting for a formal letter from her office confirming the government's intentions.

Department representatives could not be reached for comment by Thursday evening.

Members of the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs were first told in 2011 about the federal government's desire to streamline social assistance rates.

In 2013, the province's chiefs, along with chiefs from New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, won a legal battle to prevent the government from implementing its proposal.

At the time, First Nation communities argued that changes would result in significant cuts, including the removal of shelter and utilities subsidies and the clawback of the National Child Benefit.

The decision was later overturned by the Federal Court of Appeal, which found Ottawa did have the right to implement proposed cuts unilaterally and without studying impacts.

In October, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled it would not allow the assembly to appeal.

Rod Googoo, chief of We'koqma'q, a First Nation community of about 1,000 people in Inverness County, said Thursday that he was appreciative the new government has heard their concerns.

"It's a great relief for all of us. We've been fighting this for four years now, these changes, and we felt it was not fair to our people. They wanted us to go with the provincial social program, which was never designed for our communities at all.

"I think it would have almost devastated all the 40 communities in the Atlantic region had it gone through. It would have been an incredible financial burden for us to try and make up the slack, and a lot of communities were just starting out on our own sources of revenue."

Before enforcing changes, Googoo said, the government needs to address high unemployment on reserves by putting in place supports for programs such as employment training.

Although the social assistance system is not perfect, Googoo said indigenous communities need to be part of the discussion moving forward to help create the desired change.

Direct Link: <http://thechronicleherald.ca/novascotia/1326949-n.s.-first-nations-hail-welfare-decision>

Victoria Foundation awards \$1.7M in grants

[Jeff Bell](#) / Times Colonist

December 13, 2015 06:00 AM



The Rocky Point Bird Observatory has received a grant of \$20,000 for its efforts monitoring migratory bird populations. The grant was one of 89 approved by the Victoria Foundation. Photograph By DARREN STONE, Times Colonist

The Victoria Foundation has approved \$1,726,975 in community grants for 2015, with awards ranging from \$100,000 for the newly formed Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness to \$2,000 for a stained-glass restoration project at Centennial United Church.

It is a record total for the grants, which are given out each December. Overall, the foundation has disbursed more than \$14.2 million in 2015.

The funding for the Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness will support start-up activities such as strategic planning and outreach.

More than 30 per cent of the region's homeless people come from an aboriginal background, said Kelsi Stiles, acting executive director of the fledgling group.

“With aboriginal people representing such a large percentage, this needs to be addressed by the community in a much more holistic, culturally appropriate way,” she said. “And that’s why we have reached out to communities across the Island to create the Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness.”

The group will work with the existing Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness.

Bernice Kamano, who has worked in the aboriginal community for more than 30 years, called the Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness a “long-awaited reality.”

“Finally, there will be a place for the First Nations homelessness community to safely access services that are designed to help them on their journey to wellness,” she said in a statement.

The group represents a “critical piece that has been missing,” she said.

Other grants among the 89 that were made are: \$15,000 to the Peninsula Streams Society for environmental-education programs in the Greater Victoria and Saanich school districts; \$20,000 to Project Literacy Victoria to help it get re-established after a six-month closure due to financial problems; and \$20,000 to the Rocky Point Bird Observatory for its efforts in monitoring migratory bird populations.

Victoria Foundation chief executive officer Sandra Richardson said selecting grant recipients from a host of deserving applicants is a challenge.

“It’s done in such a fair and equitable process because they have a committee — the community engagement committee — that is made up of [foundation] board staff and community individuals,” she said. “The committee certainly tries their best to spread this funding as far as they can.”

The foundation’s annual Vital Signs report about issues that concern residents helps in deciding how the grants can best be distributed, Richardson said.

“That’s really the lens that the committee uses.”

- See more at: <http://www.timescolonist.com/news/local/victoria-foundation-awards-1-7m-in-grants-1.2132110#sthash.H1VeO9BL.dpuf>

Direct Link: <http://www.timescolonist.com/news/local/victoria-foundation-awards-1-7m-in-grants-1.2132110>

Aboriginal Jobs & Labour

State of mine: trainers help Inuit get jobs at Nunavik’s Raglan mine

“I decided for myself I wanted to do something different, try a new challenge... and I like it so far”

SARAH ROGERS, December 17, 2015 - 7:00 am



A jumbo bolter goes to work securing the tunnel ceiling in the Qakimajuq mine, Raglan's newest, in advance of more underground blasting. (PHOTOS BY SARAH ROGERS)



Samwillie Grey-Scott has worked as an apprentice miner trainer at Raglan since 2014, coaching new Nunavimmiut staff into skilled mining jobs.



Julie-Leah Nutara, 24, of Inukjuak, just began a two-year apprentice miner program. Once she's completed it, she'll be the second female Inuk miner at Raglan.

RAGLAN MINE — The December sun has yet to peak over the tundra when three young men, bundled in orange one-piece suits and safety gear, are ushered into the room.

Each from a different Nunavik community, these are Raglan mine's newest recruits: apprentice miners, looking nervous and keen.

Samwillie Grey-Scott welcomes them, switching between Inuktitut and English.

Grey-Scott, an apprentice trainer at Raglan, is preparing them for their first trip underground.

That first trip will determine a lot: if the new apprentices can stomach the feeling of being 1,300 metres down, and if they can adapt to a dark environment and commit to working long hours in those underground tunnels.

As Grey-Scott's Toyota Landcruiser moves down into Raglan's Qakimajuq mine, the area is surprisingly warm and humid at about -5 C, compared to -25 C above ground.

Raglan began production at this mine in early 2015. Qakimajuq, which translates as "to be rich" in Inuktitut, is aptly named: it's tapped into some of the site's highest-grade ore deposits yet.

Qakimajuq is one of four operating mine sites at the Raglan nickel mine in Nunavik. Located about halfway between Kangiqsujuaq and Salluit on Nunavik's east side, the mine consists of high grade nickel and copper deposits and employs about 900 full-time employees.

Around a dark corner, lighting illuminates a jumbo bolter — newly-imported machinery. Inside, a development miner works painstakingly drills holes along the tunnel's ceiling, bolting in wiring that will secure the area ahead of blasting with explosives.

Most new workers respond well to their first visit underground, Grey-Scott said.

He remembers how he felt when he started at Raglan as a 19-year-old, in 2010.

When he graduated from the apprentice miner program two years later, the company flew his mom from their hometown of Aupaluk to the site. On a visit to the underground, he said she gripped his arm for the entire ride down.

"It's not for everyone," Grey-Scott said with a laugh.

Seeing 20/20

The work has its challenges, but it's suited to the now 24-year-old Grey-Scott, who has developed into a star employee and spokesman for Inuit employment at the mine.

Since 2014, Grey-Scott has worked as an apprentice miner trainer under Raglan's Tamatumani program, which offers skills development for the mine's Inuit workforce.

Many at Raglan credit Tamatumani, in place since 2008, for helping the mine reach its goal of 20 per cent Inuit employment earlier this year. Since its launch in 2008, the

mine's operator, Glencore, says it has invested \$18.5 million into the skills training program.

The year 2015 also marks the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Raglan Agreement, a benefits agreement reached in 1995 between Nunavik organizations and the mine's then-owner, Falconbridge Ltd., which included a provision for royalties to be paid out to the region.

But, more importantly, the agreement included a strategy to direct at least one-fifth of the mine's jobs to Nunavimmiut.

The percentage of Inuit employees at Raglan has fluctuated since the mine began operations; it started above 20 per cent at the mine's official opening in 1998, but fell to 15 per cent a few years later.

The barriers facing the 174 Inuit currently employed at Raglan are many; some lack the necessary education and training or language skills, while others struggle to endure the required two- and three-week stints away from home.

Nunavik's Kautapikuk mining roundtable led consultations through the region earlier this year to examine issues specific to women and found that family demands are the biggest barrier for women seeking or keeping jobs at Raglan.

"I've seen so many people come and leave after a couple of months," said Raglan employee Julie-Leah Nutara. "We leave home and work so many hours."

But Nutara, now in her fifth year at Raglan, has stayed on — she says not having a spouse or children is a big factor. She splits her time between her job at Raglan, her home community of Inukjuak and travel to the South.

Nutara started at the mine in 2010, first as a dishwasher, a sandwich maker and then later as a warehouse shipper and receiver.

Last summer, Nutara began a new position as an apprentice miner, part of a slow but steady movement of Inuit women into non-traditional roles.

"I decided for myself I wanted to do something different, try a new challenge," said the softspoken 24-year-old. "And I like it so far."

She and two other apprentices take morning classes through Tamatumani, and spend their afternoons in the mine.

Most recently, Nutara has been driving the fuel truck, the boom truck or the "436," a large haul truck used to transport ore to the crusher.

When home in Inukjuak, Nutara said her friends and family often ask her if she's scared of the work.

"They are surprised and happy for me at the same time," she said. "I tell them it's a good job. I don't feel any different [being a woman]."

Once Nutara completes the two-year apprenticeship, she'll be the second Inuk female miner working at Raglan — fellow Inukjuamiut Vicki Amidlak is the other one — and one of 15 Inuit currently working underground.

When down is up

At Raglan, moving underground could be considered the equivalent of "moving up" in the work world, away from entry-level jobs such as janitor and dishwasher.

And there's room for more Inuit in Raglan's mines, says Grey-Scott, but they have to want it.

Grey-Scott has the satisfaction of coaching new blood into the mine, but he knows from experience that driving a truck over a 12-hour shift can become monotonous.

"I know that frustration personally," he said. "There is opportunity here, but you have to go out and get it. I've read the Raglan Agreement and I know there should be more options for Inuit."

That's why Grey-Scott hopes to focus on a training program in 2016 that will help move miners into more skilled positions, allowing them to operate more equipment, and earn more money.

Producing more Inuit development and production miners could translate into a larger and more stable Inuit workforce at the mine over time, he said.

A second chance

If you're above ground at the Raglan site on a clear December mid-day, you can see the pink and orange twilight out the windows of its vast housing complex, which can house some 900 people at a time.

Annie Kenuayuak has been a familiar fixture in the complex's hallways for 14 years now, sporting a wide smile and a pink Glencore Raglan fleece sweater.

As a co-ordinator of Inuit employment and training at Raglan, Kenuayuak is as comfortable in front of her computer as she is organizing local craft sales, where Inuit artisans come to the site to sell their work.

You'll also hear her on the airwaves of Nunavik's Inuktitut-language radio network, Taqramiut Nipingat Inc., telling Nunavimmiut about job openings or training opportunities at Raglan.

That was one request Nunavik communities have recently made to Raglan's leadership: they want to hear about what's happening at the mine and learn more about its Tamatumani program.

Tamatumani translates roughly as "it will be better the second time around," Kenuayuak explains.

The "second time" refers to when Xstrata took over the mine from its previous owner, Falconbridge Ltd. (Xstrata went on to merge with Glencore in 2012.)

"Falconbridge had a hard time interacting with the Inuit," Kenuayuak said.

Though Falconbridge signed the Raglan Agreement, the company was more focused on contractual obligations, she said — the mine's current owners have been more successful.

"And the reason it's successful now is because the department understands how the Inuit live and how to approach them," Kenuayuak said.

"It's been a long hard road, but we're getting there."

Nunavimmiut who are looking for more information about Raglan's Tamatumani program can call 819-762-7800, ext. 8442.



This massive sculpture, positioned at the entrance of Raglan's kitchen and dining area, was carved last year by Kangiqsujaq artist Mark Tertuluk. (PHOTO BY SARAH ROGERS)

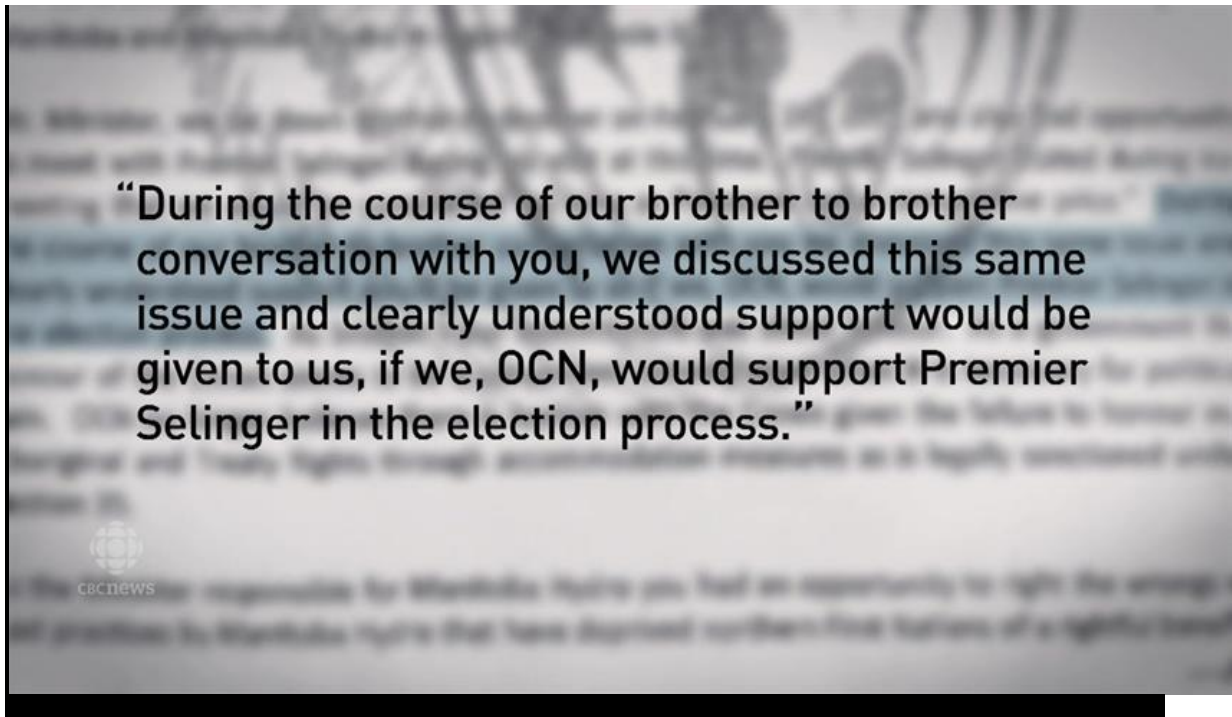
Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674state_of_mine_trainers_boost_inuit_employment_at_nunaviks_raglan_mine/

Manitoba aboriginal affairs minister denies promise of Hydro work in exchange for supporting premier

OCN chief accuses Robinson of 'agreement' for work on Bipole III in exchange for supporting Selinger

By Chris Glover, [CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 17, 2015 5:00 AM CT Last Updated: Dec 17, 2015 6:35 PM CT



Manitoba's minister of aboriginal and northern affairs is defending himself amid allegations from a First Nation chief who says his band was promised a work contract if they supported Premier Greg Selinger.

CBC News obtained a letter from Opaskwayak Cree Nation (OCN) Chief Michael Constant to aboriginal and northern affairs minister Eric Robinson dated April 21, 2015.

The letter follows a closed-door meeting between Constant and Robinson in OCN territory on Feb. 19. Constant wrote he also met with Selinger "during his visit at this time."

'When you shake somebody's hand you think they would pull through, right?'- OCN Chief Michael Constant

In his letter to Robinson, Constant wrote after the meetings he "clearly understood support would be given to us if we, OCN, would support Premier Selinger in the election process."

The "support" Constant said he was promised, in exchange for supporting Selinger, was for a bid to get a Bipole III Transmission Line work contract for construction that Manitoba Hydro was to do through OCN territory.

"That was the impression of the council, that was what we thought we were hearing at the time, but it didn't happen," said Chief Constant on the phone from OCN.

Later in the interview, Constant said his agreement with Selinger and Robinson was not a deal, "it was just an understanding," he said.

"When you make a mutual agreement, a mutual understanding with government, when you shake somebody's hand you think they would pull through, right?" Constant said.



Minister Eric Robinson says he's 'disappointed and troubled' by allegations he promised work on Bipole III in exchange for a chief's support for Premier Greg Selinger. (CBC)

In the letter, Constant wrote his band's development arm, Pawasaw Joint Venture (PJV), was not the successful bidder for the work and as a result they would be taking action against the transmission line construction.

"Given the failure on the part of the government to uphold our rights and interests we will be using any and all means necessary to ensure that the Bipole III does not cross OCN traditional territories without both Manitoba and Manitoba Hydro knowing that we do not take kindly to having our rights trampled," Constant wrote.

Despite the action Constant threatened in the letter, the OCN chief said he has backed off the idea of blocking hydro development.

"Probably not," Constant said in a phone interview with CBC News about taking legal action against the government or blocking the line's construction. "I'm going to give it another kick here to see if we can get something from Hydro."

"I still communicate with Selinger, but it's still unfinished business, I feel," Constant said.

Robinson fights back

When approached about Constant's allegations, Eric Robinson's office produced its own letter written to Chief Constant dated May 4.

In the minister's letter, Robinson wrote he was "disappointed and troubled by the correspondence of April 21, 2015, which makes several inaccurate statements and allegations that I can only assume are motivated by disappointment related to the Pawasaw Joint Venture's unsuccessful Request for Pre-qualification (RFPQ) submission to Manitoba Hydro."

In an interview with CBC, Robinson denied promising the work in exchange for support for Selinger.

"That is absolutely not right. That's inaccurate and no such things were said," Robinson said.

Robinson said the evaluation process for RFPQ submissions are conducted solely by Manitoba Hydro, and he never would have gotten involved.

"That is certainly wrong because [Constant] understands, and I understand, that I have no influence what-so-ever in the awarding of these contracts and the company and their proposal was dead last," said Robinson.

Robinson said other than the letters, neither party has any proof of an agreement involving the project.

"It's my word against his word and my honour and his honour are at question here," Robinson said.

Robinson also pointed to the fact that Chief Michael Constant's letter was not signed by Constant.

In CBC News' interview with Constant, he stood by the letter, but could not be reached for further comment about why someone else signed the letter in his place.

Support was for upcoming provincial election, chief says

Chief Constant said the "election process" he was referring to in the letter was the provincial election in April.

But the Feb. 19 meeting between Robinson and Constant took place just weeks before the NDP Leadership election, in which Greg Selinger narrowly fended off two challengers to lead the NDP into the next election.

One of the challengers, MLA Steve Ashton, has traditionally received extensive support from The Pas constituency, which OCN belongs to.

The Pas contained the largest amount of potential NDP delegates who could vote in the election of any constituency in Manitoba.

Robinson publicly supported Selinger during the leadership election.

Manitoba Hydro won't weigh in

Manitoba Hydro said Forbes Bros. Ltd. passed the RFPQ for the project and went on to be the successful bidder for the work.

That construction process has begun with work on four separate towers already underway, said Scott Powell, manager of public affairs, with Manitoba Hydro.

Powell said the value of the construction project was more than \$300 million and said it would now be up to Forbes Bros. Ltd. to determine how many workers would be needed to complete it.

For OCN's RFPQ, it partnered with a South Korean company, Samyoung.

Powell said Samyoung did not have the required experience in North America to pass the requirement process and had never worked on a transmission line longer than 100 kilometres.

Powell also said the company's experience with things, such as environmental compliance, was not sufficient to qualify.

Hydro's manager of public affairs said the decision to disqualify OCN's RFPQ was Hydro's alone and Powell would not weigh in on any correspondence between OCN and Robinson.

"If they've had some conversation with the province, you'd have to speak to them. I can't speak to that," Powell said.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/manitoba-aboriginal-affairs-minister-denies-promise-of-hydro-work-in-exchange-for-supporting-premier-1.3368392>

Aboriginal Politics

Taking First Nations issues seriously

Yorkton News Review
December 10, 2015 11:25 AM

For far too long Canada has paid lip service to indigenous issues.

This week, the country's new justice minister, Jody Wilson-Raybould, announced the realization of a Liberal campaign promise to launch a national inquiry into murdered and missing indigenous women.

That is a good thing providing it is not just a prelude to more talk and little action. Let us not forget the former prime minister refused to engage in an inquiry because he said it was time for action. Only he didn't take action. He actually ended up admitting "...it isn't really high on our radar, to be honest."

He was right, though, it is time for action, but we cannot forget this problem has extremely deep roots.

Beginning in the 1700s, the British Crown started signing treaties with First Nations. After confederation the Canadian government did so, as well. Treaties, it must be underscored are supposed to be binding agreements between sovereign nations. It also must be noted that these treaties were constitutionally recognized and affirmed in the Constitution Act (1982).

We have never treated them that way though. Instead, we entered into a series of paternalistic and racist policies and laws, most notoriously the Residential Schools Act.

Famously, Harper apologized for that on behalf of the country. His speech in the House of Commons contained strong words, but they were just that.

The new prime minister, Justin Trudeau, also spoke strong words when he addressed indigenous leaders this week in Gatineau, Quebec promising "a renewed, nation-to-nation relationship with First Nations people, one that understands that the constitutionally guaranteed rights of First Nations in Canada are not an inconvenience, but rather a sacred obligation."

Strong words indeed. And words that we all ought to take to heart.

These are huge national issues, but that doesn't mean it is not a case where people can "think nationally, act locally."

It starts with a very simple shift in attitude that there is not "us and them" there is only us.

The Liberal five-point plan to address indigenous issues is ambitious, but even if it turns out to be comprehensive and effective, there is one issue it does not and cannot address, the entrenched racism in society.

Remember, if you start a statement by saying, "I'm not racist, but..." you're probably about to say something racist.

We all have a role to play in renewing the relationship with indigenous people. It starts with seeing them first as people.

- See more at: <http://www.yorktonnews.com/opinion/editorial/taking-first-nations-issues-seriously-1.2130457#sthash.eFx4EIss.dpuf>

First Nations welcome lifting of despised 2% funding cap

'Significant catch-up funding' needed, says AFN National Chief Perry Bellegarde

By Tim Fontaine, [CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 10, 2015 6:23 PM ET Last Updated: Dec 12, 2015 12:18 PM ET



When speaking to First Nation chiefs on Tuesday, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced he would lift a two per cent funding cap that has been in place since 1996. (Adrian Wyld/Canadian Press)

First Nation chiefs are welcoming news that the Liberal government will reverse a despised 19-year cap on funding for First Nations.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau made the announcement while addressing an Assembly of First Nations conference in Gatineau, Que., on Tuesday.

"Our government will immediately, as part of our first budget, lift the two per cent cap on funding for First Nations programs," Trudeau said.

"It hasn't kept up with the demographic realities of your communities, nor the actual costs of program delivery."

First imposed by a Liberal government in 1996, the two per cent cap was a limit Indigenous and Northern Affairs placed on annual increases to First Nations' budgets.

When it was first announced, the cap was greeted with protest. It meant that despite inflation and a fast-growing population, funding for First Nations communities, programs and services could only increase by two per cent each year.

The cap's demise drew quick praise from the Assembly of First Nations.

"Nothing will have a more immediate impact in helping to close the gap than lifting that two per cent cap and launching discussions on significant catch-up funding after decades of underfunding," said AFN National Chief Perry Bellegarde.

Housing, water 'grossly underfunded'

At the AFN assembly where Trudeau made the announcement, First Nation leaders spoke of the two per cent cap as a roadblock to prosperity for First Nation communities.

"We're grossly underfunded when it comes to housing, water and infrastructure as First Nations," said Manitoba Regional Chief Kevin Hart.

"Not only in my region of Manitoba but across Canada as a whole."

Hart said it's going to cost billions just to build the thousands of homes needed to "bridge the gap" left by the two per cent cap.

One of the places where the sting of that gap has been felt is education, particularly at the post-secondary level. A growing population has had to struggle to get a portion of the inadequate funding.

Mary Alikakos, a member of the M'Chigeeng First Nation in Ontario, was a first-year college student in 1996 when her band informed her that the cap had come into effect.

"We students were given an information session regarding the cap, which they actually

called a 'community consultation,'" Alikakos said.

"I recall feeling that I was starting a program that I might not finish."

Alikakos did finish college and went on to university to get a degree in environmental science. Many students, she believes, never got that far. Fewer people with advanced degrees, she said, means fewer qualified people to work for and advocate on behalf of First Nation communities.

Liberal budget awaited

The lift on the two per cent cap officially takes effect when the Liberal government tables its first budget, sometime in the new year.

"As per the minister of indigenous and northern affairs mandate letter, [Carolyn Bennett] will be working with the minister of finance to establish a new fiscal relationship that lifts the two per cent escalator on annual funding increases and moves towards sufficient, predictable and sustained funding for First Nations communities," said a statement from the department.

But there's no word on whether this means funding for First Nation communities will immediately increase or by how much.

Clarifications

- One of the headlines on an earlier version of this story incorrectly stated "Limit on funding for First Nations to take effect in new year, Trudeau says." In fact, the limit is being lifted in the new year.

Dec 11, 2015 8:27 AM ET

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/first-nations-funding-cap-lifted-1.3359137>

Trudeau's Aboriginal plan is gestures over details

By [Anthony Furey](#), Postmedia Network

First posted: Thursday, December 10, 2015 06:28 PM EST | Updated: Thursday, December 10, 2015 06:36 PM EST



Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau listens to a question during a news conference in Ottawa, Canada, December 9, 2015. REUTERS/Chris Wattie

Aboriginal Canadians matter a great deal to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his government. It's hard to have missed this fact.

Whether it's including aboriginal artists in the swearing-in ceremony and throne speech or announcing the inquiry into murdered and missing women only several days into this session of Parliament, Trudeau clearly believes in placing aboriginals front and centre.

But sunny ways can't take the place of real results. Right now the Liberals' key pledges on the aboriginal file need better policy specifics if they ever want to execute meaningful change in their first term.

On Tuesday, Trudeau spoke to First Nations leaders to outline his priorities – with his top concerns including a “renewed, nation-to-nation relationship,” calling the inquiry and implementing recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

The results of these endeavours may produce positive change one day down the road. But both the TRC recommendations and whatever the inquiry tells us will still need to be translated into meaningful policy priorities first, before the government can do anything.

In other words, many of Trudeau's commitments on aboriginal issues are hardly commitments at all. They're gestures. They're not real policy planks ready to hit the road running.

While there's no reason to doubt Trudeau's sincerity, there is reason to doubt he can accomplish anything substantial during this term with what he's now got on the table.

Four years goes by fast in government – you need to know exactly what you want to accomplish and how you plan to get there.

One of the Liberals' most specific aboriginal campaign pledges - \$25 million to create a Metis economic development strategy - doesn't even make an appearance in the ministerial mandate letter sent to Carolyn Bennett, the minister for indigenous affairs.

The other meaty pledge, a \$2.6-billion investment in First Nations education, so far doesn't include the "measurable results" the Stephen Harper government stressed. What's the timeline? How many schools? What's the desired graduation rates? Or is this just money down a black hole?

There's also the worry they'll move backwards instead of forwards in some areas. Trudeau outlined Tuesday he'd repeal legislation from Harper's years that was supposedly imposed on aboriginal people against their will. He's already mentioned repealing changes to the Elections Act, but what else?

And will they consult with average First Nations people? Or only with the power brokers?

This distinction matters. A number of leaders had a problem with the First Nations Financial Transparency Act passed in 2013. But it gave average reserve residents a chance to hold their politicians to account. For example, the people of Kwikwetlem First Nation learned Chief Ron Giesbrecht had an income of \$914,219 in fiscal 2013-2014.

But back in 2011 Bennett, who was then the Liberal critic, called it "racist." Will they repeal it? Hopefully not. Trudeau campaigned on "open and transparent government."

The law's origins stem from First Nations members approaching the Canadian Taxpayers Federation to complain they couldn't find out how much their politicians made.

The missing women's inquiry isn't starting until next year and won't be finished until 2018.

It'll likely tell us in some form or another that too many aboriginal people live on the fringes of society and are thus more likely to be in dangerous situations.

That'll be yet another prod that we need to improve aboriginal life indicators by increasing their economic stability, growth and independence. Surely this is something all Canadians support. So why wait two years? Details please. Sooner than later.

Direct Link: <http://www.torontosun.com/2015/12/10/trudeaus-aboriginal-plan-is-gestures-over-details>

Doug Cuthand: New era begins in aboriginal relations

[Doug Cuthand, Saskatoon StarPhoenix](#)

Published on: December 12, 2015 | Last Updated: December 12, 2015 5:32 AM CST



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and AFN National Chief Perry Bellegarde at the chiefs' special assembly.
Adrian Wyld / THE CANADIAN PRESS

It has been quite a week in Indian Country. We will look back in the future at Dec. 8, 2015, as the day we turned the corner and began a new era.

Speaking to the chiefs of the Assembly of First Nations in Gatineau, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau committed his government to proceeding with an inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women, ending the two-per-cent cap on funding increases to First Nations, providing more money for reserve education and reviewing legislation passed by the former government that has an impact on aboriginal rights.

Trudeau further stressed that he would not act unilaterally, and consultations would be on a nation-to-nation basis.

News media were all over the inquiry, and that was something we expected. The real big ticket items, however, are the removal of the funding cap and achieving parity in First Nations education funding. These commitments will have a direct impact on First Nations citizens.

When the federal, provincial and First Nations governments negotiated the Kelowna Accord back in 2005, they put in place a 10-year plan to improve housing, infrastructure, education and economic opportunities on reserves. The cost was \$5 billion over five years, but it was one of the many initiatives trashed when the Stephen Harper government came to power. We got 10 more years of budget caps, lapsed funding and disrespect instead.

We lost a decade because of politics. Now the funds needed to catch up will be even greater. We need a new version of the Kelowna Accord to make things right.

But the long-term relationship between First Nations and the federal government will be on a nation-to-nation basis. This means our people and governments now have equality in our dealings with Ottawa.

The policy of a nation-to-nation relationship has a long history in Indian Country. Former leaders such as John Tootoosis used to drill it into us that we were a nation and had all the rights and respect it deserves.

First Nations sovereignty is based on our treaty relationship with the rest of Canada. The treaties between the Crown and the First Nations are international agreements between two nations. The very act of signing a treaty is an admission that two independent nations are involved.

Of course, the colonial practice of the British was to say one thing and do another; Canada under prime minister John A. Macdonald was no different. For generations we lost control of our land, our future and our lives. We were run by Indian agents and were legislated under the Indian Act, with the treaties largely ignored.

When we had the treaty rights enshrined in the Constitution they weren't defined. Instead we had to go to court to have them defined. After a long string of successful cases we have made great strides in self-government, resource management, and education and social services.

In the recent election, the Liberals and New Democrats both made recognition of our nation-to-nation relationship part of their election platforms. It was obvious that their internal aboriginal caucuses had made an impression.

The recognition of the nation-to-nation relationship spells an end to the previous colonial relationship. The Indian Act, for example, is a piece of colonial legislation whose sole purpose was the administration of First Nations people by the federal government. New legislation will have to be developed, and this time it will implement the treaties and other agreements within the framework of a nation-to-nation relationship.

First Nations and Métis people have come out of the recent federal election with unprecedented political power. Ten aboriginal MPs were elected, and two are in cabinet.

First Nations must drive the decolonization process, and it must come from within our communities. As the graffiti on the New York subway stated: "If it's your freedom you're after, they don't have it." Change is coming, but we must be the ones in control.

Direct Link: <http://thestarphoenix.com/opinion/columnists/1211-edit-cuthand-col>

How to find room for urban aboriginal people in nation-to-nation relationships



First Nations people are joined by supporters during the Walk for Reconciliation in Vancouver, B.C., in 2013. Nearly 60 percent of aboriginal Canadians live in cities. (Darryl Dyck/Canadian Press)

Sunday December 13, 2015

According to the [2011 Census](#), nearly 60 per cent of aboriginal Canadians live in cities. So when Justin Trudeau and the new Liberal government promised to build a new ["nation-to-nation" relationship](#) with First Nations, it left some urban aboriginal advocates wondering what that means for them.

Christine Smith-Martin, the executive director of the [Vancouver Aboriginal Transformative Justice Services Society](#), says it's time for a new approach.

The full interview is available in the audio player above. The following portions have been edited for clarity and length.

Prime Minister Trudeau has promised to build a nation-to-nation relationship with First Nations. How do you think that relationship will account for all of the aboriginal people who live in cities?

Well, I first want to acknowledge the amazing work that we've seen in this little time that the new prime minister has taken his office ... I'm not going to lie, I think we're a little concerned about how this is going to roll out in the urban aboriginal community. It leaves out a huge population of approximately 65 per cent of us who don't live on our reserves, and not many of us have connections to the bands that we come from. Some of our people who live here in Vancouver have never been to the band that they come from, let alone be active participants in it.

Because they were born in the city and just stayed there?

Yeah, because they were born in the city and just stayed there, and they don't really have that many connections to home communities. So we really want to make sure — you know, give him enough time to have those talks with the First Nations, and then we're hoping his next plan is, how do we reach the rest of the 65 per cent of this indigenous

community? And, you know, with the urban communities, we're all different, just the same way the First Nations are all different. Vancouver is a lot different from Winnipeg, from Calgary, from Edmonton — so this could almost take that same approach, that we're not all the same, that we're very different.

Even the language — when you hear nation-to-nation, does that even make sense if we're talking about an urban context?

Well, it definitely wouldn't in our situation, because we are a melting pot here in Vancouver. We have every single nation from across Canada that is a part of our community here. We have approximately 65,000 people here in the greater Vancouver area that are aboriginal, so you can imagine the diversity that we have within that.

If the new federal government wants to improve its relationship with aboriginal city-dwellers — so over and above the nation-to-nation relationship with First Nations councils that was discussed this week — what would you recommend?

I would recommend that he come and speak with us. I'm putting out the invitation to the prime minister to come into our urban communities and have conversations with us. I think that we will be a valuable asset to them. And we have already in place an urban aboriginal strategy that is not funded as well as it should be, and it doesn't work specifically with the communities. So there is a measure in place — he just needs to expand on that and have those conversations. Maybe he has a gathering that's all of the urban communities coming together and having that discussion with them. I think that's the whole picture.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/radio/the180/don-t-fear-the-frankenfish-rethinking-social-licence-and-how-open-is-the-new-federal-government-1.3359977/how-to-find-room-for-urban-aboriginal-people-in-nation-to-nation-relationships-1.3360049>

Liberals reach out to Aboriginal Peoples



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and AFN National Chief Perry Bellegarde speak as they arrive at the Assembly of First Nations Special Chiefs Assembly in Gatineau, Tuesday December 8, 2015. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Adrian Wyld

Dec 08, 2015

OTTAWA - The leaders of Canada's First Nations swaddled Justin Trudeau in a ceremonial blanket Tuesday as they embraced the newly elected prime minister's commitment to what he called a "sacred obligation" to the country's Aboriginal Peoples.

Trudeau didn't show up empty-handed, either.

The Liberal government will lift a long-standing two per cent cap on federal funding for First Nations communities, he told the Assembly of First Nations gathering — that, despite mounting economic and political pressure on the federal pocketbook.

He said the Liberals would also provide additional money for long-awaited education reforms to be led by First Nations communities themselves, another long-standing sticking point with the previous Conservative government.

And he repeated one of the most anticipated promises of the 2015 campaign: to investigate the tragedy of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. Three of his cabinet lieutenants kicked off the first consultative phase of what will be a federal inquiry next year.

"I promise you that I will be your partner in the years to come, and hope that you will be mine," Trudeau said.

The removal of the funding cap, which was imposed originally to keep transfer payments in line with inflation, has been at the top of the First Nations wish list for years. Critics say it has long since fallen out of step with a growing aboriginal population across the country.

"As you know, that limit has been in place for nearly 20 years," Trudeau said of the cap, which he said would disappear in the government's first budget.

"It hasn't kept up with the demographic realities of your communities, nor the actual costs of program delivery."

At one point during Trudeau's appearance, he was wrapped in a ceremonial blanket, to the delight of the crowd. An AFN spokesman described the blanket as a gift meant to convey respect and protect the prime minister from harm.

Finance Minister Bill Morneau, who has spent the government's first days in the hot seat during question period, was asked Tuesday how much the removal of the cap would cost.

He would only say that the details would be in next spring's federal budget.

But the most anticipated news came later in the day, when Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould, Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett and Status of Women Minister Patty Hajdu detailed the first phase of the forthcoming missing and murdered inquiry.

Wilson-Raybould, one of two cabinet ministers with indigenous roots, said the government will consult the families of victims over the next two months for their input on the inquiry's shape and its goals.

"We will listen clearly to their voices," Wilson-Raybould said.

"No inquiry, as we know, can undo what happened nor can it restore what we have lost. But it can help us find ways forward because we know, as a country, we can and must do better."

A website will also allow Canadians to provide input online and learn more about the process, helping to determine the inquiry's terms of reference, Bennett added.

She also hinted that the inquiry could last longer — and cost more — than the two-year, \$40-million envelope that was originally projected.

"We are going to go out and listen to what people say this needs to look like, and we will then have to apply what budget that will take," she said.

"First the facts, and then we will see."

Some family members said they felt compelled to head to Parliament Hill to hear first-hand how the initial steps of the inquiry will take shape.

Christine Simard-Chicago, who lost a cousin to the hardscrabble street life of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, said she believes the inquiry will prove to be a "hard road" for many.

"There's a lot of stories that need to be told and the circumstances are unique because they're from different territories and from different tribes," said Simard-Chicago. "It is really important that the government hear that."

Perry Bellegarde, national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, told the gathering he's confident that Trudeau is listening to the different needs of First Nations.

"In his mandate letter to each and every cabinet minister, Prime Minister Trudeau wrote it is time for a renewed nation-to-nation relationship with indigenous peoples," Bellegarde said.

"Very powerful words."

Direct Link: <http://www.therecord.com/news-story/6163921-liberals-reach-out-to-aboriginal-peoples/>

Bob Plecas report unravelling B.C. Liberal government's relationship with First Nations

by Charlie Smith on December 16th, 2015 at 8:07 AM



Premier Christy Clark has work to do in building bridges with indigenous leaders. STEPHEN HUI

Watching the fallout from a recent consultant's report on provincial child protection, I wonder how this is being viewed by Environment Minister Mary Polak.

A senior cabinet minister in the Christy Clark government, Polak has served in the past as minister of aboriginal affairs and reconciliation and as minister of children and family development.

In the former role, she helped build First Nations leaders' confidence in the provincial government, notwithstanding its policies.

That's because Polak was a strong advocate of the treaty process and for aboriginal students. She also understood how important the Ministry of Children and Family Development is to First Nations leaders.

The ministers overseeing aboriginal relations and children and family development, John Rustad and Stephanie Cadieux, have not stickhandled their portfolios with the same level of dexterity as Polak did.

Partially as a result of this, Premier Christy Clark faces her first serious controversy with top First Nations leaders in the province.

Court ruling launched crisis

The recent problem began when Cadieux's ministry had to respond to a bombshell B.C. Supreme Court ruling.

Because Clark didn't have a cabinet minister with sufficient public respect overseeing children and family development, her government called in an outside expert, retired civil servant Bob Plecas, to contain the damage.

Cadieux was getting pummelled in the legislature and something had to be done.

The court ruling attacked the ministry for giving a father unescorted access to his four small children.

The mother claimed that the father sexually abused his daughter; the ministry didn't believe the allegation and one official contacted the Vancouver police to disparage the woman's claim.

This appalled the judge, but there's since been a new wrinkle. The father has gained permission from the B.C. Court of Appeal to have his side of the story heard.

It's not out of the question that the mother's allegations may not be true and that the B.C. Supreme Court ruling won't stand.

Plecas was called to put out the fire

This was the controversy of the day triggering the consultant's probe, but Plecas couldn't address this specific issue because it's still before the courts.

So with the support of the B.C. Liberal government, he prepared an interim report "on the comparable analysis of applicable legislation, policy, standards and practice and recommendations for the improvement of the Ministry, and other, systemic processes".

Plecas recommended that "quality assurance" functions handled by the independent representative for children and youth, Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, be transferred back to the ministry within 24 months.

He also called for \$50 million in additional funding for the ministry in 2016-17.

First Nations backlash was immediate

The report threatens to rupture the government's relationship with First Nations leaders, who were upset over comments about Turpel-Lafond's role in child protection.

Soon after the report came out, they released a public letter calling Plecas's review "a wide-ranging biased survey of child welfare and politics".

In particular, the First Nations leaders objected to his "unilateral public assessment of the value of independent oversight and the performance of the current Representative for Children and Youth".

"We find this attack on this valued oversight role to be deeply offensive and inappropriate," they wrote.

The letter's signatories are the leaders of the First Nations Summit, the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, the B.C. Assembly of First Nations, and the chair of the First Nations Health Council.

Grand Chief Doug Kelly, who chairs the council, has said that he wasn't even consulted when Plecas was writing the report.

Other First Nations activists have joined in the criticism, including Scott Clark, who speaks for the Aboriginal Life in Vancouver Enhancement Society.

For her part, Turpel-Lafond has characterized Plecas's report as a public-relations exercise designed to distract the public from serious government underfunding of child welfare.

It's worth noting that the B.C. government has forecast an \$879-million surplus in this year's budget.



Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond has likened the Plecas report to a public-relations exercise.

Plecas consulted with BCGEU president

In his report, Plecas praised the president of the B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union, Stephanie Smith, for her "wise counsel" in the preparation of the report.

Smith's members' actions have, on occasion, been highlighted in Turpel-Lafond's reports dealing with the deaths of children in government care.

Here's how Plecas summed up what it's like working for the ministry:

"MCFD has always attracted a special kind of person to deliver these services in what I believe is one of the toughest jobs in government.

"Imagine going to work every day bearing the burden of knowing that, by end of your shift, you could be taking your neighbour's children away and putting them into care. Or visiting a house that is dangerous, dirty and ill-kept by parents who are using drugs and are resentful of society and the government you represent.

"Your job is to help children and parents stay together by providing them with supports, but you know that if you leave the kids there they are possibly in danger. One parent is swearing at you, and one is begging you to not take the kids, and you must decide to remove the kids or leave them with dysfunctional parents who, for better or worse, are the only family they know."

In light of this, Plecas stated that it shouldn't come as a surprise that mistakes will occur.

"I am surprised, however, that when a mistake occurs, it is the fourth level of responsibility, the level that follows family, extended family, and community—government—which becomes the focus of responsibility and failure," he wrote. "If a tragedy occurs, front line child protection decision makers are the ones whose 'heads must roll.' "

In one of his most controversial statements, Plecas declared that it's a "myth" that society can prevent all children dying as a result of abuse and neglect.

Report cited social factors behind abuse

He also insisted that the Ministry of Children and Family Development "is not in shambles".

"As long as we have child poverty, inter-generational dependence on government, high unemployment, substance abuse and dependence, individuals with untreated, undiagnosed and recurring mental health problems, and communities that pay lip service to the concept of family and neighbours, we will always have an individual, most often as a family, or extended family member in a position of power, to abuse,

and sometimes kill weaker members of society," Plecas stated. "Too often our children are the victims."

Plecas, a former deputy minister of children and family development, has been retained by the government to continue addressing the issue.

His interim report did not address provincial government policies that contribute to child poverty, growing inequality, or the expansion of liquor sales. All of these can increase the likelihood of abuse occurring.

Government has a new fire to contain

It's also curious that Plecas would praise Grand Chief Edward John for his input when John was one of the signatories to the letter condemning his review as biased. John is a former minister of children and family development.

One wonders if things would have reached this point had Premier Christy Clark appointed ministers of aboriginal relations and children and family development with greater insights into how a report like this might have been received.



Grand Chief Edward John was among those who signed the letter criticizing Plecas's review.

Plecas is a throwback to an old era. He implemented former premier Bill Bennett's restraint program in the early 1980s. It was a time when the B.C. government paid little heed to First Nations leaders and refused to acknowledge the existence of aboriginal title.

Things are dramatically different now. But the premier and her minions thought that by bringing back Bennett's fixer, they could stifle a major controversy in 2015.

It's blown up in their faces. And my suspicion is that had Polak remained in the role as minister of aboriginal relations, it could have been averted.

It's especially galling that all of this is unfolding in the week that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada has released its full report.

While the federal government appears to be taking steps to achieve genuine reconciliation, the B.C. government is going in the opposite direction.

And one of the biggest reasons is that the premier of B.C. doesn't treat this issue as seriously as Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has.

Direct Link: <http://www.straight.com/news/598136/bob-plecas-report-unravelling-bc-liberal-governments-relationship-first-nations>

Doherty touts Tory record on First Nations issues

CITIZEN STAFF / PRINCE GEORGE CITIZEN
DECEMBER 15, 2015 09:52 PM



In response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report issued Tuesday, a local MP said he's going to be watching the government's approach to addressing the issues raised by the residential school review.

"All Canadians can be proud that it was Prime Minister Stephen Harper and the previous Conservative government which issued the first-ever formal apology to former students of residential schools," said Todd Doherty, Cariboo-Prince George representative and deputy critic for Indigenous Affairs, in a press release. "Through the apology, the Government of Canada rightfully recognized that the residential schools policy had a damaging impact on indigenous and aboriginal culture, heritage and language."

The statement, issued jointly with lead ministry critic Cathy McLeod, not only thanked the commission's leaders for their work over the past six years, but also criticized the

Liberal government for "its zeal" in accepting all 94 recommendations "with no detailed impact analysis or comprehensive costing."

There is also concern that accepting the United Nations Declaration for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, "specifically text in the declaration in regards to free, prior and informed consent when used as a veto," could supersede existing Canadian laws, Doherty said.

"While the courts have been clear that First Nations have a right to be consulted on major development projects, it is important that the federal government must maintain final authority for those projects which are in Canada's national interest," said McLeod.

"Will the Liberal Party be clear with Canadians on that point?"

- See more at: <http://www.princegeorgecitizen.com/news/local-news/doherty-touts-tory-record-on-first-nations-issues-1.2133716#sthash.CtLo51hf.dpuf>

Indigenous voter turnout was up — and Liberals may have benefited most

Election numbers suggest turnout increases in ridings with large aboriginal populations

By Éric Grenier, for CBC News Posted: Dec 16, 2015 5:00 AM ET Last Updated: Dec 16, 2015 3:10 PM ET



Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde adjusts a blanket presented to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau following speeches at the Special Chiefs Assembly in Gatineau, Que., on Dec. 8. (Adrian Wyld/Canadian Press)

In the weeks since the last election, the Liberals have **launched the process to begin an inquiry** into murdered and missing indigenous women and have pledged to implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the final report of which was released yesterday.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is meeting today with **leaders from five national aboriginal organizations** as part of an effort to renew the relationship between the federal government and the indigenous people of Canada.

These moves have all followed an election in which anecdotal evidence suggested turnout among indigenous voters was up significantly over the previous vote in 2011.

An analysis of the results of the election suggests the increased turnout was far from anecdotal, and was in fact widespread and significant.

There is also some indication the Liberals may have benefited most from this increase in indigenous voting.

Reports on election day of First Nations reserves running out of ballots gave a clear signal before the votes were even counted that indigenous turnout was up significantly over the previous election. But solid data is hard to come by.

Elections Canada in the past has only been able to estimate indigenous turnout using post-election surveys or by **looking at voting that took place on reserves**, which excludes a large proportion of the indigenous population.

Despite imperfect data, it is possible to look at the results of the last election to get an idea of the scale and effect of the increase in indigenous turnout.

Above-average jump in ridings with large aboriginal population

Among all Canadians, turnout increased significantly in the last election, rising to 69.1 per cent from 61.1 per cent, representing an increase of 13 per cent. It was the biggest increase in turnout between elections in over a century.

In the top 10 per cent of ridings with the largest proportion of Canadians claiming aboriginal identity, according to the 2011 National Household Survey, the increase in turnout between the 2011 and 2015 elections averaged 22 per cent.

In the 10 per cent of ridings with the smallest proportion of Canadians with aboriginal identity, the increase in turnout averaged 13 per cent, matching the national average.

This phenomenon was repeated in every province, with the average increase in turnout in ridings with a high proportion of residents claiming aboriginal identity being greater than the provincewide increase in turnout.

In fact, 27 of the 33 ridings in Canada with the largest indigenous populations saw increases in turnout above the national average. All but one of those six exceptions had an aboriginal population of less than one-in-five, whereas the average increase in turnout

in ridings with a majority aboriginal-identity population was 36 per cent, almost three times the national average.

In Churchill-Keewatinook Aski, where three-quarters of residents identify as aboriginal, turnout increased from 43 per cent in 2011 to 62 per cent this year. In Nunavut, it increased from 45 per cent to 64 per cent.

Seven of the 10 ridings that experienced the greatest overall increase in turnout had an aboriginal-identity population of 12 per cent or more, and three of them had an aboriginal-identity population of 70 per cent or more.

Of course, these are but persuasive correlations. Other demographic groups also experienced significant increases in turnout. Without any harder data, or the poll-by-poll results from Elections Canada where it would be possible to see the increase in turnout on reserves, it is impossible to say with complete certainty (apart from the ridings which are predominantly indigenous) that these ridings with higher indigenous populations experienced an increase in turnout due to higher turnout among indigenous voters.

But, combined with what we know happened on some reserves, it is unlikely that the two are unrelated.

How did turnout affect seats?

The Liberals clearly benefited from an increase in turnout overall. Some of the ridings **they won most unexpectedly featured some of the largest increases in voter turnout**. Overall, the Liberals' vote share among all eligible voters (including those who did not vote) increased 2.4 times between 2011 and 2015.

Among the top 10 per cent of ridings with the largest aboriginal-identity populations, however, the Liberals' vote share among all eligible voters increased 4.5 times, compared with an increase of just 1.7 times in the bottom 10 percentile by indigenous population.

Half of the ridings in the top 10 per cent by indigenous population also happened to be in the top 10 per cent of ridings that experienced the greatest increase in Liberal vote share among all eligible voters, an over-representation in this group of ridings by a factor of five. By comparison, ridings with the highest increase in turnout were over-represented in the ridings in which the Liberals experienced the greatest increase of support only by a factor of two.

Did this increase in indigenous turnout win the Liberals a lot of seats?

Not exactly. The Liberals won just six of the 15 ridings with the largest aboriginal-identity population (the Conservatives and NDP split the rest). But in the seven ridings with at least one-third of the population identifying as aboriginal, the Liberals won four of them and came a close second in the other three as their vote increased significantly.

When Elections Canada releases the full poll-by-poll data from the last election, it will be possible to gauge the increase in turnout on First Nations reserves more precisely, but this will only give an incomplete picture of what happened among indigenous people. From the data that is available, however, it is clear that the campaign to get the indigenous vote out to the polls was likely a great success.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/grenier-indigenous-turnout-1.3365926>

'Things are moving very fast,' say Inuit leaders on aboriginal issues in Ottawa

PM has promised to meet with Inuit leaders in January on Truth and Reconciliation

By Sima Sahar Zerehi, CBC News Posted: Dec 17, 2015 4:30 AM CT Last Updated: Dec 17, 2015 4:30 AM CT



'This is a very exciting time for Inuit at the federal level,' said Natan Obed, the president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. Above Obed and Prime Minister Trudeau shake hands after the TRC meeting in Ottawa. (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami)

"Things are moving very fast" on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report and the inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women but Inuit leaders want to make sure that their specific issues are not ignored in the hustle.

Wednesday was an action-packed day in Ottawa for aboriginal leaders, with meetings and news conferences with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to address the next steps on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report and a meeting with key federal ministers on the inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.

"This is a very exciting time for Inuit at the federal level," said Natan Obed, the president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami.

"There's a lot of discussion about issues that we've been waiting to discuss with the Government of Canada for a long, long time."

He was one of the five aboriginal leaders at the meeting with the prime minister.

"I'm trying to take a practical and pragmatic approach to all this work so that we don't lose anything that we had hoped to get out of these processes and that our Inuit regions benefit from everything," said Obed.

He said the meeting included a discussion about education, language, suicide prevention and housing.

"In this time we can have cautious optimism," said Obed, "We can reorient a number of programs and services that are already offered to a more Inuit-specific way."

The prime minister has promised to meet with Inuit leaders in January to discuss the next steps.

Obed says in the short term it's a win for Inuit to be recognized as distinct when it comes to programs and services. In the long term he is looking for action on early childhood education, the Inuit languages and a more structured approach to implementing the land claims agreement.

In the news conference, Trudeau stressed his willingness not only to continue to work with aboriginal leaders but also with the provinces and territories to implement the recommendations of the TRC report.

"Nunavut will continue to ensure the history of residential schools is taught in our schools, so our students understand the full extent of this period in our territory's history," stated Nunavut Premier Peter Taptuna in a statement released on Wednesday in response to the TRC report.

A need for an Inuit-specific approach

On Wednesday the federal ministers of justice, status of women and Indigenous Affairs also hosted a meeting with aboriginal leaders to discuss action plans on the inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.



'There needs to be an Inuit specific approach,' said Rebecca Kudloo the president of the Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada who was at the meeting.

"Things are moving very fast," said Rebecca Kudloo, president of the Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, who was at the meeting.

"There needs to be an Inuit-specific approach to the pre-consultation phase as well as in the inquiry."

Kudloo said she wants to make sure that supports are provided to families during the inquiry, especially for women and children in small and remote Inuit communities with few resources. She said 70 per cent of Inuit communities don't have shelters to support women fleeing from abusive relationships.

"We are willing to work with them," said Kudloo, adding that she's looking forward to a meeting in the near future to hash out plans to support Inuit communities throughout the inquiry.

"We are asking that we are fully involved and Inuit communities be consulted," she added.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/things-are-moving-very-fast-say-inuit-leaders-on-aboriginal-issues-in-ottawa-1.3368852>

Real work needed on aboriginal file

POSTMEDIA NETWORK

FIRST POSTED: WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2015 07:15 PM EST |

UPDATED: WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2015 07:20 PM EST



Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau speaks during a news conference with aboriginal leaders on Parliament Hill in Ottawa, Canada, December 16, 2015. REUTERS/Chris Wattie

The only way we're going to make progress on aboriginal prosperity is through nitty-gritty hard work. This is what Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his Liberal government need to focus on.

We don't need any more conferences and papers and commissions and inquiries – at least not if they just result in what they normally result in, which is more talk.

On Wednesday, Trudeau met with First Nations leaders and quite rightly said: “We didn't want to have a meeting so we can set up more meetings so we can celebrate in a gathering the fact that we've had meetings and we're going to have more meetings. We need to actually get to work on addressing concretely some of these very real challenges.”

We couldn't agree more. Canada has had too many grand sweeping plans to improve the sorry life indicators that persist in aboriginal communities. There was the White Paper in 1969. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in 1996. The failed Kelowna Accord from 2005.

Now we have the final Truth and Reconciliation Commission report and its 94 recommendations. Will this help better the lives of Canada's aboriginal population – too many of whom live in sad conditions? Here's hoping.

The question is, to what degree and how soon Trudeau will “actually get to work”, as he says. Too many of his campaign promises on this subject were vague and not really about policy. They were about improving relations – which is great, but not a roadmap to specifics.

Ending boil water advisories. Increasing employment opportunities. Improving community safety and policing. These are just some of the urgent issues that need to be addressed now. Not later. Not after the murdered and missing women inquiry wraps up in two years.

Trudeau's platform did put forward a few specific ideas on this file, but not enough.

Good gestures, no matter how optimistic they make all parties feel, can't address very real hardships. It's detailed policy work that'll do this.

No Canadian supports the status quo. Everyone wants to see the poor life indicators faced by aboriginals improved. Trudeau has the mandate and public support to get to work.

Direct Link: <http://www.torontosun.com/2015/12/16/real-work-needed-on-aboriginal-file>

Energy, the Environment & Natural Resources

Small island states team up with Inuit and Arctic groups at COP21

"1.5 degrees is more than enough"

NUNATSIAQ NEWS, December 10, 2015 - 10:00 am



Delegates at Dec. 8 plenary session of the United Nations climate change conference are likely to meet beyond the planned Dec. 11 wrap-up for COP21. (PHOTO BY UNFCCC)



The world's coldest and hottest regions on Dec. 9 called for greenhouse gas emission cuts that will be deep enough to limit the average global temperature increase to 1.5 C.

Their joint call came Dec. 9, as delegates to the COP21 United Nations climate talks in Paris sat down to finalize the latest draft text of a new agreement for a pact aimed at limiting global climate change.

The statement from the Inuit Circumpolar Council, Saami Council, the Pacific Indigenous Network and the Government of the Seychelles followed the Dec. 9 release of a [new draft text for the "Paris Outcome," which showed, among other things, that there's still no agreement](#) among the 195-plus nations at the talks on how to put limit on the world temperature increase, to 2 C or less.

"We are seeing significant climate related impacts in the Arctic at one degree Celsius so 1.5 degrees is more than enough," said Okalik Eegeesiak, ICC's international president, in the release.

Eegeesiak said that even a 2 C limit would lead to "dramatic and irreversible effects on Arctic communities," where any increase is expected to be two to three times higher than elsewhere in the world.

"We are a pragmatic and adaptable peoples, but 2 degrees Celsius will be an insurmountable challenge," she said.

And, as the Arctic melts and the sea levels rise, Eegeesiak said, one billion people living in low-lying areas are at risk of becoming the "new environmental migrants."

The same message came from Ronny Jumeau, the Seychelles ambassador for climate change and small island state issues, who said that Arctic and small island peoples have much in common.

“We are on the front lines of climate change. Science tells us that 2 degrees is a threshold after which climate change effects will become even more severe. Even 1.5 is too high but it will buy us some time to adapt,” he said.

Aile Jávo, the president of the Saami Council, which represents Saami in northern Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia, also said that “we need to see some action and fast.”

The Arctic and island leaders pointed to Canada, which supports the 1.5 C target, as an example of “the kind of commitment that countries at COP21 need to demonstrate for the negotiations to succeed.”

“There must be an immediate, concerted effort by the global community to address climate change,” said Maatalii Okalik, the president of the National Inuit Youth Council. “Our future depends on it.”

The Seas at Risk and Transport and Environment lobby groups slammed the Dec. 9 draft text which had omitted aviation and shipping as contributors to climate-warming emissions.

“The dropping of international aviation and shipping emissions from the draft Paris climate agreement... has fatally undermined the prospects of keeping global warming below 2 C,” the two groups [said in a joint statement](#).

A plan to reduce short-lived climate pollutants, such as soot and methane, within the next five years was endorsed Dec. 9 by 49 ministers, 16 intergovernmental organizations and 44 non-government organizations.

Catherine McKenna, Canada’s chief COP21 negotiator and federal minister of environment and climate change, said in a statement that “short-lived climate pollutants are responsible for a substantial portion of the current rate of global warming.”

“Sustained reductions can help slow the rate of near-term warming, globally and in sensitive regions, such as the Arctic. As a northern country with a vast Arctic territory — this is extremely important to Canada,” McKenna said.

She said Canada would commit \$35 million over five years to address short-lived climate pollutants, with \$10 million to be dedicated to a climate change clean air coalition trust fund.

A new draft COP21 text is set to be announced sometime during the afternoon of Dec. 10, according to [an agenda sent out late Dec. 9](#).

Negotiators continued all-night meetings into Dec. 10, still with the goal of having the final document ready by 6 p.m. (Paris time) on Dec. 11 — but decided later to push this

deadline ahead, until Saturday morning Dec. 12, to gain more consensus on the many unresolved issues.

Direct Link: http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674make_cuts_in_climate-warming_emissions_say_arctic_and_island_states_at/

AFN launches 11th hour lobbying over Indigenous rights exclusion from climate change deal

[National News](#) | December 9, 2015 by [APTN National News](#)



(An all-Indigenous flotilla took to kayaks Sunday on the Bassin de la Villette, which is Paris' largest artificial lake and connects to the city's canal system. Photo/Allan Lissner)

APTN National News

GATINEAU, Que.—The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) has launched an 11th hour lobbying effort targeting countries with natural resource investments in Western Canada over the current [exclusion of Indigenous rights](#) from the operative text of a global climate agreement under negotiations in Paris, according to a British Columbia grand chief.

First Nation Summit Grand Chief Ed John said AFN National Chief Perry Bellegarde will be sending letters to the ambassadors from countries like India, Malaysia, China, Japan and the European Union pressing them to back efforts to put Indigenous rights into the text of the climate agreement. John said the AFN wants to remind these nations that they have investments in resource development projects that are on Indigenous territory.

The AFN passed an emergency resolution on the issue Tuesday directing Bellegarde to begin lobbying on the issue.

“The pressure is still on,” said John, whose organization represents B.C. First Nations.

AFN chiefs are currently meeting at the Lac Leamy Casino in Gatineau, Que.

The AFN resolution has been sent to the Indigenous caucus at the Paris climate talks for distribution among the 190 states currently involved in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21), said John. The Indigenous caucus is not directly involved in the negotiations which involve only member states.

EU ambassadors were also lobbied during a meet and greet at held Tuesday evening, said John.

EU countries have been among the states that are against the inclusion of Indigenous rights in the final climate change agreement, which aims to stem the warming of the planet to 2C above pre-Industrial temperatures.

Canada is warming at the twice the global rate.

The preamble of the draft climate change agreement currently includes a mention to Indigenous rights, but even that is now under threat.

The reference to Indigenous rights was removed from the main body of the text during the round of negotiations headed by officials from the countries involved in the negotiation. The negotiations have now moved to the political level and a final agreement is expected by Dec. 11.

Canada is backing efforts to include Indigenous rights in the climate change agreement.

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/12/09/afn-launches-11th-hour-lobbying-over-indigenous-rights-exclusion-from-climate-change-deal/>

The Raglan Agreement at 20: how it's shaped Nunavik's mining industry

"It was a real trail-blazing event"

SARAH ROGERS, December 11, 2015 - 4:00 pm



Heavy machinery moves through the Raglan mine site last week. Raglan, which first went into operation in 1997, operates four mines — Katinniq, Mine 2, Kikialik and Qakimariurq — about 100 kilometres south of Nunavik's Deception Bay. (PHOTO BY SARAH ROGERS)



Nunavik officials sign the Raglan Agreement Feb .28, 1995 in Kuujjuaq. The agreement was the first Impact Benefits Agreement signed in Canada between a mining company and an Indigenous group. (PHOTO COURTESY OF RAGLAN MINE)



The Raglan mine site, including its 900-room housing complex, is pictured here in summer. (PHOTO COURTESY OF RAGLAN)



The Raglan mine accommodates its Inuit employees with different services, including this on-site kitchen for staff to prepare country foods. (PHOTO BY SARAH ROGERS)

“It feels like it was just yesterday,” says Willie Keatainak, thinking back to a day that will always stand out in his memory: Feb. 28, 1995.

That was the day when Keatainak, then mayor of Salluit, and other Nunavimmiut leaders gathered in Kuujjuaq with officials from Falconbridge Ltd. to sign the [Raglan Agreement](#).

The agreement was the first Impact Benefits Agreement signed in Canada between a mining company and an Indigenous group.

In 1995, the Raglan mine was still a few years away from going into operation, out of a sprawling complex laid out on the tundra about 100 kilometres south of Salluit.

The agreement itself laid out the terms between the Inuit of Nunavik, namely the nearby communities of Salluit and Kangiqsujuaq: how the project would be monitored and how it would ensure Inuit enjoyed the requisite social and economic advantages.

Keatainak knew the project well — for years before he was elected mayor, he worked as a liaison between Raglan and his community.

When negotiations began towards the agreement, Sallumiut had only one project to compare it to: the Asbestos Hill mine, which operated near the community through the 1970s.

The project had brought some wealth to the community, but it had also left behind dilapidated mining structures and tailing ponds.

“I wanted people to understand that the community had been affected by prospecting projects for the three decades before Raglan started,” Keatainak said.

“Mining activities had a big impact on the community in terms of environmental concerns and also the social issues. At that point, people didn’t have much of a say.”

Having Inuit communities at the table this time around was key, Keatainak said, and helped secure benefits, including the more than \$100 million paid out to the region in profit sharing since the mine opened.

Twenty years later, there’s a sense of accomplishment and of celebration.

The mine’s current operators, Glencore, marked the anniversary with events and entertainment at the mine site earlier this year.

This week, as the company does each year, Glencore will host a community supper in Salluit and Kangiqsujuaq, with gifts of ham — and toys for its younger residents.

“You have to understand that this was one of the first negotiated agreements of its kind in North America, maybe even the world,” Keatainak said.

“It was a real trail-blazing event. I hope it’s been a benefit to both our people and our land.”

It’s not only the 20th anniversary of the Raglan Agreement that gives Nunavik’s leadership pause, but [the mine plans to expand its lifespan well beyond its initial expected closure in 2020.](#)

Raglan’s phase two, called the Sivumut project, would include two new underground mines which would operate from 2019 to 2032.

Although Glencore has since announced it has postponed its phase two plans, the company says Sivumut is still on the horizon.

Glencore is currently completing an assessment of the project’s social and environmental impacts, to be evaluated by the Kativik Environmental Quality Commission in 2016.

“I just hope it works out better in the second phase,” Keatainak said.

When Keatainak says “better,” he’s talking about jobs for fellow Sallumiut. At 20 per cent Inuit employment, the Raglan mine is meeting a goal laid out in the Raglan Agreement, but regional leaders would like to see more Nunavimmiut take advantage of employment opportunities.

“We’ve learned much from negotiating and implementing that agreement,” said Adamie Delisle Alaku, vice president of renewable resources at Makivik Corp. and another signatory to the agreement.

“In essence, it’s about trust and mutual respect.”

Among all the concerns over the negative environmental impacts of mineral exploration, Alaku said Nunavimmiut recognize the opportunities.

“And that’s the main thing — generating jobs,” he said. “It might not be a lifelong career, but you go there for a couple of years and make your money.”

That’s what Salluit-raised Alaku did; three years as an open pit foreman and another seven as a human resources coordinator with Kewit-Nuvumiut, an Inuit-owned contractor that works at Raglan.

The trilingual and college-educated Alaku thrived at his work but he saw many other less skilled Nunavimmiut struggle as they competed for jobs with more qualified Southerners.

Many Inuit come to the mine site without basic certification such as a driver's license, Alaku noted; others rely on apprenticeships to move into mining positions.

And although the Raglan Agreement gives hiring priority to Nunavimmiut, the mine workers' union prioritizes qualified workers, he said.

"If they want to increase their Inuit percentage, they have to put trainers in all the fields," he said. "If you want an apprentice mechanic, put a trainer in the garage."

Makivik has learned some lessons along the way, Alaku said. With the region's newer nickel mine, Nunavik Nickel, the organization opted to keep the IIBA private, and not distribute royalties to individual Nunavimmiut.

That project had less support from the region; residents of Salluit and Kangiqsujuaq didn't want to see a second mine, Alaku said, but the project went ahead anyway.

"I think for [future mining projects], we need better monitoring and a better say," he said. "But I think we keep the same formula."

"We've benefited from the Raglan Agreement," he added. "It's been really good for the region."

Come back to NunatsiaqOnline.ca Dec. 14 to read more about Raglan mine's Inuit workforce.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674the_raglan_agreement_at_20_how_its_shaped_nunaviks_mining_industry/

Nunavut environment minister defends Inuit traditional knowledge at Paris conference

"We have made sure to always incorporate and talk to local people"

NUNATSIAQ NEWS, December 14, 2015 - 1:30 pm



Johnny Mike, Nunavut's environment minister, delivers a keynote address to the Arctic Encounter symposium in Paris Dec. 12. (PHOTO COURTESY OF THE GN)

Inuit are living proof of the value of traditional knowledge, Nunavut's environment minister, Johnny Mike, told an Arctic-themed conference in Paris over the weekend.

Mike used his Dec. 12 keynote address at the Arctic Encounter symposium — a side event at the COP21 climate change talks — to promote the benefits of using both science and traditional Inuit knowledge, or Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, as a way to both mitigate climate change and adapt to it.

"People often ask if this knowledge is valuable," Mike told an audience at Paris' École Militaire Dec. 12.

"Yes, the proof of its value standing before you. I guarantee my ancestors would not have survived over a thousand years in the unforgiving Arctic without Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit."

The principles of IQ are not as quantitative as western science, Mike said, but require watching, observing, listening and doing.

"This traditional knowledge on how to hunt, navigate the land and water and our ice is passed on by our elders from generation to generation," he said in his address.

"We have made sure to always incorporate and talk to local people, as they are the ones who live and breathe their very own environment."

Mike referred to scientific research conducted through the 2000s on Nunavut's western Hudson Bay polar bear population, which predicted the gradual decline of the population due to a changing climate.

Those predictions [turned out to be inaccurate](#), Mike said, noting later studies done in collaboration with local Inuit that found the population to be stable.

That led the Government of Nunavut to approve a [modest increase in the quota for that population](#) earlier this year, from 24 to 28 polar bears.

Nunavut has shown that these two forms of science can complement each other and together be used to form policy and programs to better mitigate the impacts of climate change, Mike told the Arctic Encounter participants.

“It is now ever more important for the need to work together to ensure that scientific knowledge and knowledge from Indigenous people in all parts of the world is taken seriously, and is used and valued in the decision-making process,” he said.

Mike’s speech to Arctic Encounter took place just hours before the [final text of the Paris Agreement was adopted Dec. 12.](#)

The 31-page, legally-binding document commits to keeping the world’s mean temperature rise “well below” two degrees Celsius and to limit that to 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels.

But Inuit and Indigenous groups have said the agreement [falls short of recognizing their rights](#) and providing funding for their communities to cope with climate change.

The 195 parties to the agreement plan to meet again in 2018 to discuss progress.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674nunavut_environment_minister_defends_traditional_knowledge_in_paris/

Inuit org says COP21 agreement is historic, but a work in progress

"There is more work to do to safeguard the Arctic environment and Inuit culture"

NUNATSIAQ NEWS, December 15, 2015 - 10:00 am



At COP21 Nunavut Premier Peter Taptuna, Inuit Circumpolar Council President Okalik Egeesiak and

Greenland's Finance, Mineral Resources and Foreign Affairs Minister Vittus Qujaukitsoq pose in front of a rendering of the iconic Eiffel Tower — made from old chairs. (HANDOUT PHOTO)

The global climate change agreement finalized Dec. 12 in Paris is “historic,” Okalik Egeesiak, chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Council, said in a news release, but she said she also acknowledges that it’s a compromise.

“Progress was made,” Egeesiak said.

“But there is more work to do to safeguard the Arctic environment and Inuit culture. Inuit will need to be vigilant to support international efforts to reduce greenhouse gas levels are reduced, that funding is available for Arctic climate adaptation projects and that Inuit are part of the climate change solution.”

Egeesiak led the circumpolar Inuit delegation to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21) talks in Paris, which [ended Dec. 12 with the adoption of the Paris agreement.](#)

“These negotiations were tremendously difficult, but in the end we made progress,” Egeesiak said in the release. “However, the real test will be the commitments of states to recognize the rights of Indigenous peoples, address climate change action and affect real change in Arctic communities”.

Egeesiak said that ICC would continue to will work with Canada, Greenland, Alaska and Chukotka “to meet and exceed the commitments, support indigenous communities and make certain the Arctic remains cold.”

ICC had lobbied at COP21 for more inclusion of Indigenous peoples in the agreement, for the financing of climate adaptation and mitigation projects for Indigenous peoples and the recognition of Indigenous peoples’ knowledge.

And ICC had also lobbied for he need to stabilize global temperature increase to 1.5 C as opposed to the more globally accepted 2 C, Egeesiak said.

The final Paris Agreement text states that nations commit to “...holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 C.”

In the Arctic that temperature rise is expected to be two to three times more.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674inuit_org_says_cop21_agreement_is_historic_but_a_work_in_progress/

Arctic communities will need help to deal with climate change

'We are basically developing communities same as those in third world countries,' says Okalik Eegeesiak

By Sima Sahar Zerehi, [CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 15, 2015 5:30 AM CT Last Updated: Dec 15, 2015 9:52 AM CT



'Most of the governments that were in Paris announced significant amounts of money for developing countries,' said Okalik Eegeesiak, the chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Council, 'But it seems that the northern communities, the First Nations communities, get forgotten about in these types of funding arrangements.' (Sima Sahar Zerehi/CBC)

Following the signing of a global pact to fight climate change over the weekend, Inuit leaders and Nunavut politicians are pointing out that Arctic communities, like developing countries, are going to need help to reduce their emissions and address the impacts of climate change.

Nearly 200 nations adopted the Paris Agreement on Saturday, resulting from the 21st meeting of the Conference of Parties, or COP21.

The agreement, which comes into effect in 2020, aims to keep warming from rising more than 2 C over pre-industrial levels, and eventually to limit that to 1.5 C. The signatories are asked to set national targets for reducing emissions and improve them regularly.

Now it's up to Canada to implement its strategy on how to reduce greenhouse gases. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has promised to meet with the premiers within 90 days of COP21.

'We are basically developing communities'

"I'm hoping that national aboriginal organizations and their respective communities will be involved in these meetings with the premiers," said Okalik Eegeesiak, chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Council.

In a statement, Trudeau promised to move toward a climate-resilient economy and invest in public transit, green infrastructure and clean technologies. He also promised "significant support to help developing countries reduce their emissions and deal with the impacts of climate change."

Eegeesiak said she wished Arctic communities were included in that promise.

"Most of the governments that were in Paris announced significant amounts of money for developing countries but it seems that the northern communities, the First Nations communities, get forgotten about in these types of funding arrangements," she said.

"We are basically developing communities same as those in third world countries."

To address this issue, Eegeesiak said the Inuit Circumpolar Council signed a co-operation protocol with the government of Greenland and the government of Nunavut speaking to the lack of infrastructure, and the need to address it.

'We can't lose sight of our link with nature'

Natan Obed, president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, said, considering the financial constraints within Arctic communities, they will have to "be creative" to find ways to reduce emissions.



Natan Obed, ITK president, said, considering the financial constraints within Arctic communities, they will have to 'be creative' to find ways to reduce emissions. (Sima Sahar Zerehi/CBC)

"As far as our communities now, the way that they operate, they rely on diesel generators for power and rely on fly-in fly-out links for just about everything," he said.

"We should be reconsidering; we should be looking for any possible way that we can to live more sustainably."

"I think that we can, as a people, push our governments across all four Inuit regions to figure out ways in which we can, at the micro level and at the community and regional level, do our part."

He said making these changes will go a long way in preserving the Inuit relationship with the environment they live in.

"We can't lose sight of our link with nature and also with our past," said Obed.

A lot of help needed

John Smol, a professor at Queen's University and Canada's Research Chair in Environmental Change, has been doing research in Nunavut for the past 30 years.

"When it comes to greenhouse gas emissions from diesel fuel, that's something that people are going to need a lot of help with," he said.

"There's a potential in the Arctic of wind power and other types of power, but we're all struggling with this."

He added that relying on fossil fuels has been the easy way.

"The Arctic is especially vulnerable to this because there are difficulties finding good alternatives."

Smol said the sooner alternatives are found, the better it will be for the territory. In the meantime, he said things such as better insulation in housing, turning down the thermostat and choosing to use vehicles less often will reduce fuel use and the territory's carbon footprint.

"That all accumulates," said Smol,

"Everyone says 'My footprint is such a small part,' but you put a whole bunch of footprints together and it makes a big effect."

Every new mine increases the carbon footprint

"The territory is underdeveloped so our economy is just really behind the rest of the country," said Steve Pinksen, an assistant deputy minister in Nunavut's Department of Environment.

He said the development of non-renewable resources is one way that Nunavut is trying to build its economy to address its infrastructure needs.

"Every mine we open increases our carbon footprint by somewhere in the area of 15 to 25 per cent — a large amount, relatively speaking," said Pinksen.

Nunavut needs to balance its need for development with its desire to manage its carbon footprint and that's the message he said the Northern premiers will be taking to their meeting with the prime minister.

"In terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the territories need a bit of a break here to allow our economies to catch up to others before we're going to be able to play our role in reduction," he said.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/arctic-communities-climate-change-1.3365036>

Peel watershed land use case may go to Supreme Court of Canada

3 First Nations, CPAWS, Yukon Conservation Society to apply to have case heard by nation's top court

CBC News Posted: Dec 15, 2015 8:00 AM CT Last Updated: Dec 15, 2015 4:37 PM CT



3 Yukon First Nations along with the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society and the Yukon Conservation Society say they will seek leave to appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada, before the new year. (Cheryl Kawaja/CBC)

Yukon First Nations and environmental groups are launching a final appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada over the Peel watershed land use plan.

Lawyers and representatives from three Yukon First Nations, the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS), and the Yukon Conservation Society (YCS) made the announcement at a news conference Tuesday morning in Whitehorse.

"This is not something we take lightly," said Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in chief Roberta Joseph. "We understand the challenges that are in front of us. We also know we must meet them head on, to protect the integrity of our agreements as well as the land use planning process."



'Court action was not our first choice. Our initial hope was for the government to be a collaborative partner,' said Roberta Joseph, chief of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation. (CBC)

"We're willing to take this stand not only for the Peel but for all future planning processes in the Yukon."

The groups said they will file an application for leave to appeal to the Supreme Court before the new year.

'A mistake in law'

Last month, **the Yukon Court of Appeal ruled** that the territorial government did not respect the land use planning process set out in final land claim agreements, when issuing its plan for the Peel region.

The court ordered the process to return to an earlier stage to allow for proper consultation.

The First Nations and environmental groups will argue in their application to the Supreme Court that ruling was "a mistake in law and that it does not uphold the integrity of the Final Agreements." They will also argue that the ruling will introduce "substantial uncertainty" into future land use planning processes.

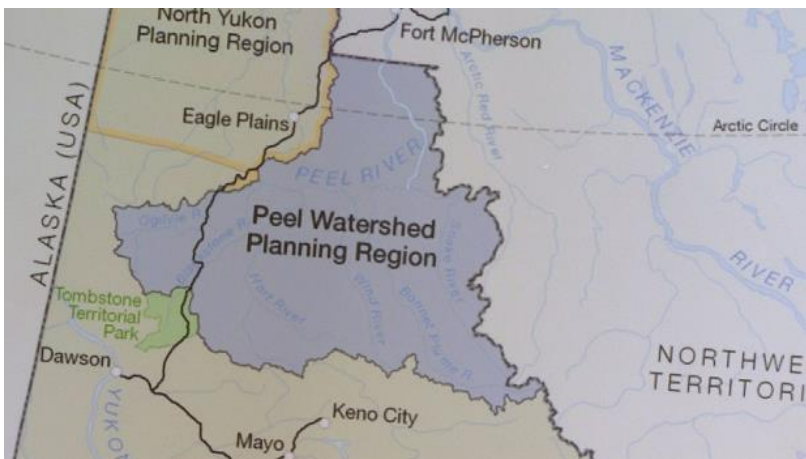


'This ability for a 'do-over' works to great advantage to the government,' said Margaret Rosling, a lawyer representing the First Nations and environmental groups. (CBC)

Last month's decision "would effectively give Yukon Government a 'do-over'," said Margaret Rosling, a lawyer for the First Nations and environmental organizations (Tom Berger, the group's lead counsel was not at Tuesday's announcement, as he's recovering from surgery).

"This ability for a 'do-over' works to great advantage to the government, and to the great disadvantage of First Nations, Yukoners and the process contemplated under the final agreements," Rosling said.

She worries the appeal decision makes it possible for the government to do the requisite consultation, then "scrap the entire initiative and reject the entire plan, leaving no plan for the Peel."



The Peel Watershed drains 14 per cent of Yukon's territory, mostly pristine wilderness. (Philippe Morin/CBC)

Yukon government 'disappointed'

The Yukon government issued a statement Tuesday saying it was disappointed that the case may go before the country's highest court. The government said it was satisfied with the Yukon Court of Appeal decision.

Once the groups file their application to the Supreme Court, the Yukon government will have 30 days to respond. The court will decide sometime next year whether to hear the appeal.

If the appeal goes ahead, the costs would be covered by the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Na-Cho Nyäk Dun and Vuntut Gwitchin First Nations, as well as CPAWs and YCS.

The five groups are holding a public event tonight in Whitehorse to talk about the case. A livestream of that event is also being presented in Haines Junction, Dawson City and Inuvik.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/peel-watershed-supreme-court-appeal-1.3365220>

Caribou recovery better with First Nations involvement: study



A Woodland caribou bull in Torngats is seen in this undated handout photo. (Mike Bedell / THE CANADIAN PRESS/HO, CPAWS)

Bob Weber, The Canadian Press
Published Thursday, December 17, 2015 2:50PM EST
Last Updated Thursday, December 17, 2015 4:44PM EST

EDMONTON -- If Canada is serious about reconciliation with First Nations, a new study suggests that giving them a greater voice in caribou conservation might be a good place to start.

The Boreal Leadership Council -- made up of First Nations, business leaders and environmental groups -- released a study Thursday that concludes having indigenous people on board makes a big difference to conservation programs.

And, said report author Valerie Courtois, the cultural value of caribou could make the animals a powerful way to bring indigenous and mainstream society together.



Wild caribou roam the tundra near the Meadowbank Gold Mine located in Nunavut on March 25, 2009.
(Nathan Denette / THE CANADIAN PRESS)



Mountain caribou

"Recognition of the role and responsibility of indigenous people towards caribou is a recognition of culture," said Courtois. "It's a much healthier place to start from in seeking reconciliation than one of non-recognition."

A recent survey of boreal caribou across the country graded efforts to conserve the shrinking herds to be mediocre at best.

While a few provinces have made positive moves, the report from the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society found the amount of protected habitat for the animals increased only one per cent, despite federal requirements.

But Courtois' survey says conservation programs rooted in indigenous communities have big advantages over those that aren't.

Elders or hunters frequently on the land can provide early warnings of changes before they show up in formal surveys. Indigenous-led programs were often more flexible in adjusting to changes, the survey found.

First Nations can also provide extra capacity to provincial environmental agencies that have had budget cuts. And the commitment of indigenous people to maintaining caribou -- especially if traditional knowledge is incorporated into recovery plans -- helps ensure best practices.

And First Nations have the benefit of long experience with an animal whose numbers have gone through large swings over the decades.

"We've got people who are present and can notice trends and changes over long periods of time."

Some bands, such as the Athabasca Chipewyan in Alberta or B.C.'s West Moberly, are already playing a significant role in caribou conservation, said Courtois. But most such plans are still run by bureaucrats, she said.

"The norm for recovery planning is that it is led by provincial recovery teams. Many First Nations have had a dissatisfying experience with that process because it's been mostly framed around western science."

Courtois said the type of habitat frequented by woodland caribou is also ground zero for large resource developments. That makes caribou recovery a complicated task -- but it's also where different groups in society can meet to work together.

"Caribou is one of those things that can really show the impacts of leadership," Courtois said. "As we started looking across the country, we started noticing that there's some real innovative stuff coming out of First Nations."

Direct Link: <http://www.ctvnews.ca/sci-tech/caribou-recovery-better-with-first-nations-involvement-study-1.2704703>

Land Claims & Treaty Rights

Assembly of First Nations backs Kelly Lake Cree Nation land claim

[Jonny Wakefield](#) / Alaska Highway News
December 10, 2015 07:54 AM



Kelly Lake Cree Nation Chief Cliff Calliou with Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde. The AFN endorsed Kelly Lake's claim to nearly 40,000 of unceded land stretching from Jasper National Park to just south of Dawson Creek. Photo By Supplied

Assembly of First Nations (AFN) chiefs have backed the Kelly Lake Cree Nation's claim to a vast swath of territory stretching from Central Alberta to the Peace River.

The 40,000-square kilometre claim stretches from Kelly Lake, 50 kilometres south of Dawson Creek, north to the Peace River and down to Jasper National Park. Kelly Lake's claim was endorsed by the AFN Special Chiefs Assembly at the organization's annual meeting this week.

The nation, which is incorporated under the B.C. Society Act, filed a comprehensive claim against the federal government in 1996, followed by a civil claim against B.C. in 2010. The government of Canada does not officially recognize Kelly Lake as a First Nation under the Indian Act.

The matter has not been before a judge.

The Kelly Lake Cree Nation claims Canada "continues to discriminate" against them "by failing to acknowledge their existence and by failing to consult with them on the use of their traditional lands and resources," the AFN resolution states.

"We've never been in court, we've been in case management," said hereditary Chief Cliff Calliou. "In 2016 we're ready to go to court if the government of Canada doesn't want to put some kind of a framework on the table to work on."

The First Nations people living around Kelly Lake are descendants of Cree and Beaver people, and also claim lineage to Iroquois trappers who travelled with the North West Company in the 1700s. Many of the 800 members speak Cree.

In 1915, their ancestors were "pushed out" of their settlement at Jasper House to make way for the Canadian Northern Pacific railway, the group claims. They say they were similarly pushed out of Grande Prairie in 1916.

In a 1997 filing with the Office of the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs, Kelly Lake claimed damages of around \$5.2 billion "for profits taken by the defendants (Canada) from the exploitation of resources of the plaintiffs, and interest."

Establishing a claim to the land involves both historical research and genealogy work. The group counts 13 family lineages, and has set a Dec. 31 deadline for people in those families to register as members of the nation. Another society, Foothills First Nation, also seeks to represent Aboriginal people in the area.

Calliou said he hopes Kelly Lake will be recognized as a "self-governing, self-determined nation," a model different from the Indian Act.

He hopes Justin Trudeau's government will be receptive to the claim, saying the AFN endorsement helps their negotiating position.

"We asked the Harper government several times to see if they were interested in negotiating this claim, and unfortunately we never got any real direct response," Calliou said.

The outcome of the claim will have big implications for natural resources. The group is contemplating oil and gas levies for development in the territory if the claim is successful, according to a release. The territory includes the right-of-way for the Northern Gateway pipeline.

Calliou's hope is the government will settle out of court through negotiations.

"If it doesn't, then we're ready to go to court," he said.

- See more at: <http://www.alaskahighwaynews.ca/regional-news/assembly-of-first-nations-backs-kelly-lake-cree-nation-land-claim-1.2130343#sthash.5uSnOKAR.dpuf>

First Nations chief tracks down cabinet ministers to protest Site C dam

MARK HUME

VANCOUVER — The Globe and Mail

Published Sunday, Dec. 13, 2015 8:29PM EST

Last updated Sunday, Dec. 13, 2015 8:36PM EST

If Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's new cabinet ministers needed any reminder of how difficult their jobs are going to be when it comes to rebuilding trust with First Nations, they got it last week.

Working the crowd, when the Liberal caucus gathered for its annual Christmas party, was Chief Roland Willson, a big man with a powerful voice and an intractable problem he wasn't going to let anyone ignore.

Mr. Willson, chief of the West Moberly First Nations, went to Ottawa hoping for sit-down meetings with several ministers. When he couldn't get them, he walked into the Christmas party with briefing papers and a short, hard pitch about why the Site C dam has to be stopped.

"Oh, I tracked them down. I presented them with our documentation," said Mr. Willson.

"I got in front of [Indigenous and Northern Affairs Minister Carolyn] Bennett. She's been given the mandate to meet First Nations," he said. "I got in front of Minister [Hunter] Tootoo, the Minister of Fisheries. A couple of the big permits that have to be issued to BC Hydro come out of his ministry ... and I got in front of Justice Minister [Jody] Wilson-Raybould ... She told us they would look at this. They are supposed to review all their legal issues and this is one of the biggest."

Mr. Willson also met James Carr, the Minister of Natural Resources, who invited him to his office.

"The mere fact we got to sit down with Minister Carr was a big deal with everything that's going on in Ottawa," he said. "We had an hour-long meeting. That's an hour longer than we ever got with the Harper government on this issue."

Mr. Willson asked the federal government to hit pause on BC Hydro's \$9-billion Site C hydro project on the Peace River, to allow time for a review of the assessment process and to look for alternative energy sources. With site preparation work already under way on the river, it might seem his trip to Ottawa came too late.

But he's hoping Mr. Trudeau meant it when he wrote in his mandate letters to ministers: "No relationship is more important to me and to Canada than the one with Indigenous Peoples."

The Prime Minister has underscored the importance of that by launching an inquiry into murdered and missing indigenous women, and by declaring his government will implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The UN declaration requires states to consult with indigenous people "in order to obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources."

Mr. Willson's message is that his people have not consented to Site C, which will flood 57,000 acres, drowning traditional hunting, fishing and trapping areas, and an unknown number of graves and sacred sites.

"If they are talking about setting the course right [with First Nations] – they need to start with this project," Mr. Willson said.

He wants Ottawa to withhold the numerous federal permits BC Hydro needs, including authorizations to damage fish and migratory bird habitat. And then, during the pause that

follows, he wants a review of the Order in Council that approved the environmental certificate.

He feels a review, and adherence to the UN declaration, will halt the dam.

But BC Hydro has already spent \$423-million on the project, and the provincial government is pushing to proceed even though there are still legal challenges by First Nations before Federal Court.

Did any of the federal ministers tell Mr. Willson the project was just too far advanced to stop?

“No. I never got that impression,” he said. “They said they’ll look at it.”

It will need a long, hard look because the federal government is in a difficult position. On the one hand, Mr. Trudeau has promised new respect for the rights of First Nations. On the other, the province has spent a lot of money on the project and it would be politically damaging to stop it.

“They are confronted with almost an almost impossible task,” agreed Mr. Willson. “But we have hope.”

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/first-nations-chief-tracks-down-cabinet-ministers-to-protest-site-c-dam/article27741994/>

Maliseet First Nations 'dismayed' by Sisson Mine approval

New Brunswick needed to accommodate aboriginal rights before approving EIA, says lawyer

CBC News Posted: Dec 16, 2015 12:50 PM AT Last Updated: Dec 16, 2015 2:02 PM AT



Dominique Nouvet represents the six Maliseet First Nations of St. Mary's, Oromocto, Kingsclear, Woodstock, Tobique and Madawaska in their negotiations with the New Brunswick government about the Sisson mine project. (CBC)

A lawyer representing the six Maliseet First Nations in New Brunswick says the communities are "dismayed" to hear the province has issued environmental impact assessment approval to the Sisson Mine project before concluding aboriginal accommodation discussions with them.

"It was sudden and in our view, it was premature," said Dominique Nouvet in an interview on *Information Morning Fredericton* on Wednesday.

"Honestly, based on this sudden and premature approval of the EIA, I don't think that right now New Brunswick understands what is required. Under its duty to accommodate and consult First Nations when the government contemplates actions or decisions that may affect aboriginal or treaty rights," she said.

"My sense, based on Sisson, is that they are not grappling with the bigger picture and the bigger reality that New Brunswick is subject to aboriginal title claims from the Maliseet, from the Mi'kmaq.

'I don't think this province is grappling at all with the reality of aboriginal title claims in the province.'- Dominique Nouvet

"I don't think this province is grappling at all with the reality of aboriginal title claims in the province."

On Dec. 3, the environment department announced it had given environmental impact assessment approval for the Sisson Mine project, subject to 40 conditions.

Northcliff Resources said it will cost \$579 million to build the open-pit molybdenum and tungsten mine on 12.5 sq. km of land north of Fredericton near Napadogan.

"This mine is in Maliseet territory," said Nouvet. "As far as I know, no Maliseet community supports it."

Nouvet represents the six Maliseet First Nations of St. Mary's, Oromocto, Kingsclear, Woodstock, Tobique and Madawaska in their accommodations negotiations with the New Brunswick government.

She has also worked directly for St. Mary's First Nation since 2012, and said it has not had any direct negotiations or agreement with Northcliff about the proposed mine project.



After the proposed Sisson mine closes, the tailings pond would flow into the open pit over a 10-year period. A 'floating baffle curtain' would be set up in the pit to help filter the water.

Nouvet said the six Maliseet First Nations have been engaged in high-level negotiations with the province since the summer "to see whether the province might be willing to meaningfully accommodate their aboriginal treaty rights if the mine goes forward."

"We were in the middle of those negotiations and suddenly the approval came," she said. "Those negotiations should have concluded before the province gave its main approval for the mine."

Litigation likely

Nouvet indicated if the mine proceeds without aboriginal treaty rights being accommodated, litigation by the Maliseets is likely to follow.

"At that point the fate of the mine becomes very much uncertain," said Nouvet.



Energy Minister Donald Arseneault said the provincial government has been consulting continuously with First Nations and will continue to do so. ((CBC))

One of the government's conditions of approval for Northcliff is that work on the mine begin within five years.

Green Party Leader David Coon agreed with Nouvet's assessment.

"Clearly, this and past governments have yet to take the issue of land title, for one thing, seriously," said Coon. "And secondly, have not taken the issue of consultation and accommodation seriously."

Energy Minister Donald Arseneault said the Liberals have consulted extensively with First Nations and will continue to do so.

"Since the first day of taking office, we have consulted with the First Nations. We continue to consult with First Nations and we will continue to consult with First Nations," said Arseneault.

"We have major energy and mines projects ... that we're looking hopefully to see the light of day, but we can't make those projects happen if we don't include the First Nations."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/maliseet-sisson-mine-eia-1.3367349>

B.C. First Nations laud Trudeau's tanker moratorium

Fram Dinshaw

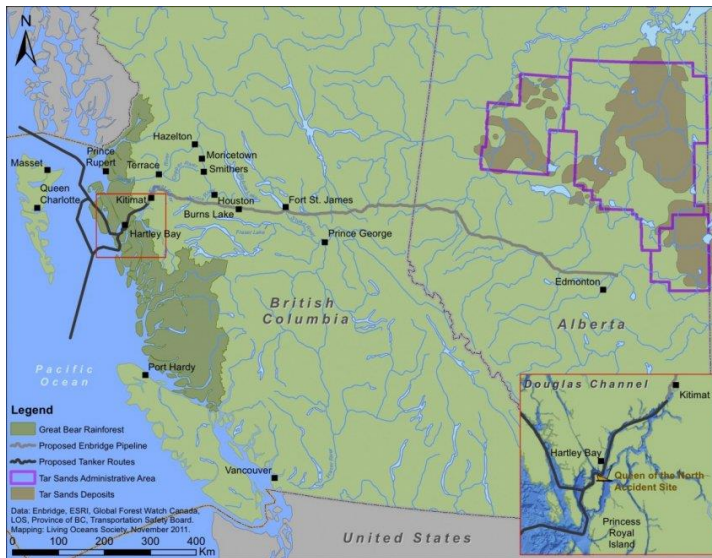
Dec 17th, 2015



First Nations leaders announce the launch of their federal legal challenge to the Northern Gateway pipeline at a Vancouver press conference on Oct 1. (Photo: Mychaylo Prystupa).

First Nations representatives from northern British Columbia gave a warm welcome to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's moratorium on oil tanker traffic in their traditional territories.

The federal government's tanker moratorium will keep ships out of northern B.C.'s Pacific coast and is seen by some observers as a roundabout way of stopping Enbridge's proposed Northern Gateway oil pipeline. If built as planned, the pipeline would pump oil sands crude from Alberta to a tanker port in Kitimat on the Pacific coast, from where it would be exported abroad. Oil tankers would traverse waters around the Great Bear Rainforest and other areas of pristine wilderness.



“Now the federal government has created an opportunity to demonstrate that it is listening to First Nations by ensuring these types of projects no longer threaten the environment in the region. I encourage the federal government to seize that opportunity by enacting a strong and comprehensive oil tanker moratorium for the Pacific north coast. We only have one Earth to take care of,” said Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs.

Ottawa's tanker ban comes five years after more than 100 First Nations communities signed the Save the Fraser Declaration, an accord prohibiting oil megaprojects in signatories' territories.

The Yinka Dene Alliance, which [took the former Conservative government to court](#) after it conditionally approved the Northern Gateway project earlier this year, also welcomed PM Trudeau's tanker ban.

Saik'uz First Nation chief Stanley Thomas, who is also an alliance member, said that the federal moratorium would protect not only the ocean, but also their lands, freshwater supplies, plants, animals, and the communities that depend on them.

“We support the federal government on this. I think our boats are finally pointed in the right direction,” said Thomas.



The former Conservative government conditionally approved Northern Gateway in June 2014 despite widespread popular opposition from British Columbians. Opponents of the pipeline condemned the National Energy Board’s review process for Northern Gateway as flawed, as it did not examine the long term impacts of pipeline construction, tanker traffic, spills, or oil sands expansion on climate change.

“An oil spill would devastate fishing, tourism, and traditional subsistence harvesting, which are the backbones of the economy in the North and Central Coast and Haida Gwaii,” said Marilyn Slett, chief of the Heiltsuk Nation and president of the Coastal First Nations.

Promises to keep

Just days after his government was sworn in last month, PM Trudeau issued a mandate letter to Transport Minister Marc Garneau, directing him to implement the tanker moratorium together with the ministries of natural resources, fisheries, and the environment.

"The dispute between First Nations and the federal government over Northern Gateway has been prolonged and highly-charged, diverting resources away from the many other important issues in the region that require constructive, forward-looking dialogue," said Chief Fred Sam of the Nak'azdli Nation, which is also a member of the Yinka Dene Alliance.

However, halting tanker traffic on the Pacific coast could cause a legal headache for PM Trudeau, as any measures that disrupt shipping in this area may be contested by the United States. The Americans maintain that their ships have freedom of navigation along this stretch of coast, which is a sea corridor to communities across the Alaska Panhandle.

What's more, Enbridge has also managed to win support from 28 of the 40-plus Indigenous bands living along Northern Gateway's proposed route, according to the *Globe and Mail*. This could mean that First Nations communities once opposed to the pipeline may yet support it, possibly breathing new life into the energy giant's plans to pipe oil to tankers on the Pacific coast.

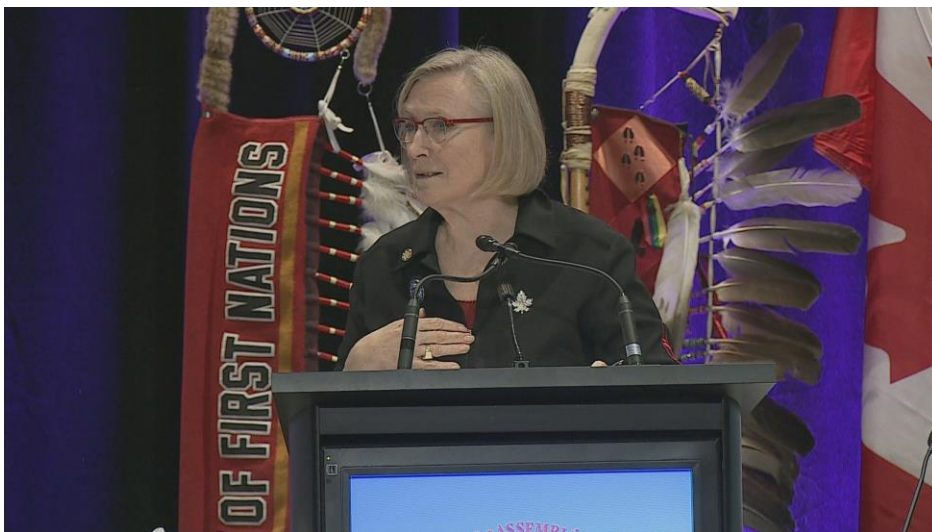
Direct Link: <http://www.vancouverobserver.com/news/bc-first-nations-laud-trudeau-s-tanker-moratorium>

Special Topic: Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women

Carolyn Bennett confirms meeting with families of missing, murdered indigenous women

'This government gets it,' AFN Chief Perry Bellegarde says

By Susana Mas, [CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 10, 2015 1:57 PM ET Last Updated: Dec 13, 2015 1:52 PM ET



Indigenous and Northern Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett reiterated her government's commitment to renewing Canada's relationship with its indigenous people during a speech to First Nations on Thursday.

"This government shares your passion and commitment to a renewed relationship. We all together have both an exhilarating and daunting job ahead," Bennett said in closing remarks to a group of chiefs and First Nations delegates after three days of meetings organized by the Assembly of First Nations in Gatineau, Que.

Bernadette Smith, whose sister Claudette Osborne has been missing since 2008, expressed concerns earlier in the day about the minister speaking with other groups before meeting with the families.

Bennett confirmed she will be meeting with the families of missing and murdered indigenous women in Ottawa on Friday "as a first step" toward the launch of a national inquiry in 2016.

"We'll meet with the families from this region, with the goal of designing the inquiry and the process — and then we will go out and meet with the families in all of your regions."

Bennett said she will consult not just with the victims' families but also with the provinces and territories, as well as national aboriginal organizations.

"The inquiry will seek recommendations on concrete actions that governments, police services and civil society can take to address and prevent this violence," Bennett said. "My federal colleagues and I will need your help to make sure we get it right."

Bennett added that leadership means "asking not telling."

"It means that we know the solutions are with you and that our job is to actively listen and to harvest those solutions," she said.

Bennett also confirmed Prime Minister Justin Trudeau will be meeting with national aboriginal organizations next Wednesday, a day after the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) is to present its final report in Ottawa.



Dawn Lavell-Harvard, president of the Native Women's Association, addressed the chiefs meeting earlier Thursday.

She spoke about the crisis of missing and murdered indigenous women, as well as the government's announcement confirming the process to launch an inquiry is underway.

Lavell-Harvard said she would like to see a national inquiry address racism within the ranks of the RCMP.

Her comments followed a surprising admission Wednesday by RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson, who conceded before the assembly of chiefs that [there are racists inside his police force](#).

Paulson's remarks came after Grand Chief Doug Kelly, leader of the Sto:lo Tribal Council in British Columbia, confronted the top Mountie publicly, urging him to address racism within his force.

In an interview airing on CBC News Network's *Power & Politics*, Kelly said he never expected Canada's top cop to be so frank.

"I almost fell out of my chair," Kelly said.

AFN National Chief Perry Bellegarde told the chiefs that Paulson's admission was "a powerful statement" and "a very public commitment to reconciliation and to addressing racism wherever it may live in the RCMP force."

'This government gets it'

In his closing remarks, Bellegarde called the three-day assembly "historic."

While Bellegarde refrained from personal attacks and never once mentioned the former prime minister by name, he drew comparisons between Stephen Harper's Conservatives and the new Liberal government under Trudeau.

Trudeau addressed the chiefs on Tuesday, when he laid out [his top 5 priorities](#) for a renewed relationship with Canada's indigenous people.

'This issue is high on the radar and we're going to keep it high on the radar.'
- *Perry Bellegarde said of an inquiry into missing, murdered indigenous women*

"The prime minister joined us here a few days ago to acknowledge that our constitutionally protected rights are not only legal obligations but a sacred obligation."

Bellegarde said what he heard from Trudeau and his ministers this week gave him cause for hope that the relationship between Ottawa and First Nations will be "less adversarial" going forward.

"No more will this federal government spend \$106 million fighting our rights," he said. "No more will this federal government waste \$1 billion over five years on funding that should have went to First Nations but lapsed. And no more will there be unilateral changes."

Trudeau said his government would also look to repeal bills passed "unilaterally" by the Conservatives, with Bennett saying Thursday First Nations want the Liberals to rescind the First Nations Financial Transparency Act.

Bellegarde said what resonated with him most was the government's promise to lift the two-per-cent funding cap on First Nations programs — something he also urged Harper to do.

"This government gets it," Bellegarde said.



The national chief said he was encouraged to see this government move forward with a national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women.

"This issue is high on the radar and we're going to keep it high on the radar," Bellegarde said in a veiled reference to an answer Harper gave CBC News chief correspondent Peter Mansbridge in an interview one year ago.

["It isn't really high on our radar,"](#) Harper said last December, when asked if he would consider launching some sort of investigation into the 1,200 documented cases of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.

Bellegarde also noted that the new government vowed to implementing all 94 recommendations included in the TRC report, something the Conservatives did not commit to.

"We feel stronger and hopeful today because Canada has committed itself to fully implementing the calls to action starting with the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People."

Bellegarde was elected AFN chief a year ago [after his predecessor Shawn Atleo resigned](#) amid protests from chiefs who thought he'd grown too close to Harper's Conservatives.

"Your AFN is back," said Bellegarde in his closing remarks. "It's going to be strong, united, relevant, responsible and respectful."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/missing-murdered-indigenous-women-meeting-1.3359158>

Inquiry into missing aboriginal women hits close to home for Lethbridge woman

By [Kim Tams](#) Videographer Global News, December 9, 2015 6:05 pm



LETHBRIDGE- It was a summer day in July 2007 when 43 year-old Jacqueline Crazybull's life was cut short. She was one of five people randomly attacked in Calgary. She died from a single stab wound while sitting on a bench.

To this day, her family gives the Calgary Police Service a failing grade when it comes to the investigation.

"I think four people were attacked that day and she was the only one who died," said Lauren Crazybull, Jackie's niece. "Up to this day, no one has been caught."

Since 1980, about 1,100 aboriginal women in Canada have gone missing or been killed.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau made a campaign promise that if his party was elected, the liberals would call an inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women. Now, his government is moving ahead on that promise. It's an good starting point, but Crazybull is waiting to see how it unfolds before praising the move.

"A lot of people are suspicious about the inquiry. Will they look into these cases that are still open? Will they investigate the RCMP? What is the inquiry going to do?" she asked.

Crazybull feels aboriginal people across Canada don't trust police to take them seriously. In fact, she says they often fear victimization from those same officers.

“Why have these cases not been looked into properly and will there be an investigation into the RCMP that were involved in these cases? How are they being handled compared to caucasian cases?” asked Crazybull.

The government says the first two months of the inquiry will focus on gathering feedback from victims’ families.

Direct Link: <http://globalnews.ca/news/2391373/inquiry-into-missing-aboriginal-women-hits-close-to-home-for-lethbridge-woman/>

Police racism must be addressed in inquiry, aboriginal leaders say

'Once the lid is taken off the box you can't put it back inside,' says Native Women's Association of Canada



RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson admitted to hundreds of Assembly of First Nations chiefs at a conference in Gatineau, Que., Wednesday that there are “racists” in his police force and that he does not want them there.

By: [Tanya Talaga](#) Global Economics Reporter, Published on Thu Dec 10 2015

Police racism must be part of the inquiry into [murdered and missing indigenous women and girls](#) because it is a fundamental part of the problem, the head of Canada’s aboriginal women’s association said Thursday.

“It is going to get ugly but we have to have the courage to stick with this. Once the lid is taken off the box you can’t put it back inside or pretend it isn’t happening,” said Dawn Lavell-Harvard, president of the Native Women’s Association of Canada.

She spoke out against racism before hundreds of Assembly of First Nations chiefs gathered in Gatineau for a special three-day conference. The chiefs supported Harvard

and included the issue of [police racism](#) in a special resolution passed on the hallmarks of what they want covered in the much-anticipated inquiry.

Racism within the RCMP ranks surged to the surface on Wednesday after RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson admitted to the chiefs there are “racists” in his police force and that he does not want them there.

The admission both stunned and was praised by First Nations leaders. They called Paulson brave for honestly speaking about it after British Columbia Grand Chief Doug Kelly challenged him by saying, “We encounter racism every single day. Some of the worst racists carry a gun and they carry a badge, authorized by you, Commissioner Paulson.”

In Parliament, NDP Leader Tom Mulcair, questioned Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on if the government will make the mandate of the inquiry broad enough to include issues like systemic racism in judicial and police institutions.

Racism in any form is unacceptable and runs contrary to Canada’s long history of diversity and inclusion, Trudeau replied, saying Canada is committed to “real change and supports decisive action by the RCMP to hold its members accountable.”

Police and institutional attitudes have been called into question since former aboriginal affairs minister Bernard Valcourt said that in 70 per cent of the cases of murdered and missing aboriginal women, indigenous men had been the perpetrators.

Indigenous leaders demanded to know where the 70 per cent figure came from as it was not explained in the first RCMP report on murdered and missing indigenous girls and women, released in May 2014. At the time, the RCMP report said there were 1,181 murdered and missing aboriginal women and girls.

Racism and how police forces interact with indigenous people is an ongoing concern with chiefs.

The Star series “Gone: Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women” recently examined [Thunder Bay’s struggle with racism](#), including the unsolved hate crime sexual assault of a mother of six.

Indigenous women in Val-d’Or, Que., a small town about 500 km northwest of Montreal, recently came forward with allegations of abuse of power and assault perpetrated by the provincial police. An investigation is now taking place.

“After the situation in Val-d’Or, women across the country came out and said this isn’t just happening in Val-d’Or, this goes all across the country — Thunder Bay, Saskatchewan. People are talking,” Harvard said.

On Friday, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett will meet with the families of murdered and missing indigenous women and girls, alongside with Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould and Status of Women Minister Patty Hajdu.

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2015/12/10/police-racism-must-be-addressed-in-inquiry-aboriginal-leaders-say.html>

Morrisseau case has 'all the components' to be in Aboriginal inquiry, says foster mom

By [Sam Cooley](#), Ottawa Sun

First posted: Thursday, December 10, 2015 10:30 PM EST | Updated: Thursday, December 10, 2015 10:37 PM EST



Kelly Morrisseau was found bleeding in a parking lot in Gatineau Park and died an hour later in an Ottawa hospital. SUN FILES

Even though she's thousands of miles away and nine years have passed, Caroline Anawak isn't forgetting about Kelly Morrisseau's unsolved murder.

As a former counsellor, Anawak was fostering Morrisseau's three children when the pregnant mother was stabbed and left to die in a Gatineau parking lot on Dec. 10, 2006.

Anawak spent extensive amounts of time with the Morrisseau children and had met their extended family over the course of 12-15 months.

And on the ninth anniversary of Morrisseau's death, she said it wasn't the first tragedy suffered by the aboriginal family she provided services for.

Morrisseau's mother, Lisa, moved to Ottawa in the first place because her sister had mysteriously gone missing when the family was in Manitoba many years ago, according to Anawak.

And after Kelly Morrisseau died, Anawak said, her three young children struggled.

"I was very worried because I saw the young daughter, who was going through the most. The oldest one was bearing all the pain, the anger, and all the questions. Some of her acting out behaviours ... she was grieving. Nobody ever helped them do that," said Anawak, who now lives in Iqaluit.

"That's why every year, I raise (awareness) about Kelly. There's stories within stories."

Anawak said the case never garnered enough scrutiny and she told the Sun she remains hopeful the upcoming inquiry will not only shed light on the case, but also why aboriginal women are so vulnerable, marginalized and devalued.

"Both within and outside the aboriginal community (with respect to) the devaluing of women," said Anawak. "What allows these women to die?"

She said the Morrisseau case certainly fits the bill and deserves to be front and centre in the inquiry announced earlier this week.

"What more of a picture could we paint of the suffering in one family?" she said. -I believe it has all the components that a commission should look at."

Direct Link: <http://www.ottawasun.com/2015/12/10/morrisseau-case-has-all-the-components-to-be-in-aboriginal-inquiry-says-foster-mom>

MMIW inquiry: 'This is not an indigenous problem, this is a Canadian problem'

Status of Women Minister Patty Hajdu confident this aboriginal inquiry will be different

By Chris Hall, [CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 11, 2015 5:00 AM ET Last Updated: Dec 13, 2015 12:46 PM ET



AFN National Chief Perry Bellegarde adjusts a blanket presented to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau following speeches at the Assembly of First Nations special meeting in Gatineau on Tuesday. (Adrian Wyld/Canadian Press)

Not much in politics produces agreement anymore. The reaction to the national inquiry into murdered and missing indigenous women was an exception.

What had become a divisive issue under the previous Conservative government is now one of unanimity on Parliament Hill.

Both opposition party leaders expressed support. The new prime minister identified the inquiry as one of a handful of priorities in re-establishing what he called his government's "most important relationship."

"Those touched by this tragedy have waited long enough. The victims deserve justice, their families an opportunity to heal," Justin Trudeau told the Assembly of First Nations at a conference this week in Gatineau, Que.

It was an acknowledgement that the way forward begins with understanding where you are, and how you got here.

In Canada, the hundreds of missing and murdered indigenous women had been reduced to a set of statistics. The victims' families felt, with some justification, that their lives were deemed of lesser value.

They wanted police — [as the inquiry into serial killer Robert Pickton recommended in 2012](#) — to make "prevention of violence against aboriginal women a genuine priority."

One of the cabinet ministers with the task of making that happen, and consulting victims' families before drafting the mandate of the inquiry is Patty Hajdu.

She's new to politics. But the status of women minister is no stranger to the deeper root causes behind this issue.

Indigenous women most vulnerable

Hajdu spent years running the largest homeless shelter in Thunder Bay, Ont., where indigenous people made up 80 per cent of the clientele.

Indigenous women, she says, were absolutely the most vulnerable.



Minister of the Status of Women Patricia Hajdu says the problem of missing and murdered indigenous women is a national tragedy that Canadians want to see ended. (Justin Tang/Canadian Press)

"If you want to see the effects of colonization, come visit a homeless shelter," Hajdu says in an interview aired Thursday on [the podcast edition of CBC Radio's *The House*](#).

"The effects of residential schools, displacement, policies that contribute to the economic and social suffering by First Nations communities, communities that don't have equitable service or education — they're victims of our history of colonization."

Hajdu's experience before entering politics underscores the complexity of the issues the inquiry will need to address.

Its mandate will, of course, be about understanding why indigenous women and girls are six times more likely to be homicide victims than other women, according to Statistics Canada.

A 2014 report by the RCMP found that 1,181 aboriginal women were killed or disappeared between 1980 and 2012. An update this year identified another 32 homicides of indigenous women in RCMP jurisdictions since then.

The inquiry will, obviously, need to come up with recommendations on how to stop the violence. And it must give the families of the hundreds of women who've died or gone missing a sense that justice, finally, is being served.

But its mandate, by necessity, must extend beyond crime.

Addressing systemic racism

The underlying issues that make these women and girls more vulnerable arise from social inequality and what Hajdu calls "systemic racism and oppression that is so significant that they have a very hard time accessing the services they need in a timely way, even when it's urgent and extreme."

That message is already getting through.

This week AFN leaders told [RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson that he needs to confront racism](#) in his force, a challenge Paulson bluntly acknowledged.

"I understand that there are racists in my police force. I don't want them to be in my police force," he said.

New Democrat MP Niki Ashton says the inquiry is an important first step for families who want answers. But it's only a first step.

"It's not just about building a website or building awareness, We have to get at the root causes of the violence.. and identify what women need in their communities to be safe. The federal government has to be part of that solution."

Ashton's riding of Churchill-Keewatinook Aski has the second highest aboriginal population in the country, and the lowest median income.

She says indigenous people have seen other inquiries and royal commissions struck to recommend action on issues facing indigenous people, and watched the governments of the day do little in response.

"This is not an indigenous problem. This is a Canadian problem," she says. "We need to recognize that Canadian society devalues the lives of indigenous women, it will take all of us to restore that value."

Somebody's daughter, sister

Hajdu understands the skepticism. She understands that questions are already being raised as to why, this time, the response to this inquiry will be different from the ones that came before.

"I would say the difference is the commitment our prime minister is making, nation to nations, to people directly. I think when you have leadership committed to acting, it's much easier for the parts to follow."

Trudeau has already signalled that the government will lift the two per cent cap on funding for First Nations programs that was imposed 20 years ago by another Liberal government.



He also pledged this week to make "significant investments in First Nations education," but didn't repeat the party's campaign pledge to invest an additional \$300 million a year over four years.

Even so, delegates at the AFN remain confident that these first steps are heading in the right direction, and that non-indigenous Canadians are ready to walk with them.

Hajdu agrees.

"I don't think we need to convince them," she said in the interview on *The House*. "The response from non-indigenous Canadians is that this is a national tragedy.

"Largely, people want this to end, and they understand that these women are people's sisters and cousins and daughters. It doesn't take much for people to have empathy when you can tell a story that resonates with everyone. Everyone is somebody's kid, right?"

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/mmiw-inquiry-patty-hajdu-chris-hall-1.3359915>

Loretta Saunders's cousin hopeful for missing and murdered indigenous women inquiry

Holly Jerrett believes an inquiry equals movement forward

[CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 10, 2015 9:00 PM NT Last Updated: Dec 10, 2015 9:00 PM NT



Holly Jerrett also started the #AmINext social media campaign after her cousin Loretta Saunders was murdered. (Facebook)

Consulting with family members of missing and murdered indigenous women is going to be a "wonderful part" of a newly announced public inquiry process, according to a cousin of Loretta Saunders, the Inuk woman who was found murdered nearly two years on a New Brunswick highway, and whose death brought additional focus to the issue.

"I'm really hopeful," said Holly Jerrett, whose cousin was murdered in Nova Scotia, where she had been planning to write an academic thesis on murdered and missing aboriginal women.

"I really honestly believe that there's going to be movement forward now — some actual real movement forward."

The Trudeau government announced [phase one](#) of the national inquiry plan on Tuesday.



Loretta Saunders, an Inuk woman, was murdered in Nova Scotia nearly two years ago. (Gofundme)

Ministers were set to start meeting with the family members of murdered and missing women in Ottawa this week.

"They need to know that our families are fractured, our families are damaged," said Jerrett.

"The proud, strong Inuk in me doesn't want to say anything like that but the fact and the reality is that we are."

What will work

Jerrett said as part of the national inquiry, indigenous people need to create their own dynamic of healing so that they don't become hurt by another system.

'I really honestly believe that there's going to be movement forward now — some actual real movement forward' - *Holly Jerrett*

"Something that's going to work in Halifax for a Mi'kmaq family is not going to be the same kind of strategy that's going to work in Iqaluit with an Inuk family," she said.

"They really need to let us determine where we go."

She also said government needs to find a way to diversify and become empathetic.

#AmINext?

Jerrett was instrumental in creating social media awareness around missing and murdered aboriginal women.

She launched an electronic petition last year that garnered 347,000 signatures from 100 countries.

Another part of the campaign involved having a picture taken with a sign that reads [#AmINext?](#)

Jerrett isn't sure in what capacity, if any, she'll be involved with the inquiry. But, she says her campaign helped move a government and that's what she set out to do.

"I think the satisfaction in knowing I've moved a little bit, created a little bit of mobilization with [#AmINext]... that's satisfaction enough."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/holly-jerrett-mmiw-inquiry-1.3359414>

Fearful or fierce? Raising my indigenous daughter in Canada

'We shouldn't have to raise our daughters in fear,' community organizer Lenard Monkman writes

By Lenard Monkman, [for CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 12, 2015 8:00 AM ET Last Updated: Dec 14, 2015 11:04 PM ET



'We all need to reflect on what type of country we want to raise our daughters in,' says Lenard Monkman. (CBC)

Last year, 15-year-old Tina Fontaine was found in a bag in Winnipeg's Red River. On the day after her body was recovered, I went to pick up my kids and I couldn't help but notice there were homicide detectives across the street from where my kids lived in the West End.

I had this grim feeling in my stomach that the detectives were looking for clues in Tina's homicide. A few days later, the police said the last place Tina was seen alive was across the street from where my kids were living at the time.

I have a teenage son and a young daughter. My daughter was seven years old when I had to tell her there are people out there who don't value the lives of indigenous women and girls. I had to tell her to be street smart. Is this a conversation that non-indigenous people have with their seven-year-old daughters?

There are a different set of worries when raising indigenous children. Is it fair that we have to have this conversation with our children?

'Why is my tongue so unsettling?'

A few weeks ago Erica Violet Lee, a Cree student from University of Saskatchewan, playfully took a selfie with her tongue sticking out and Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall behind her, at the climate summit. It was a spur of the moment move, but it started to gain a lot of attention on social media. After the selfie went viral, someone commented: "Next time you are chosen to represent Saskatchewan, don't act like a cheap whore, so disappointed that little girls like you roam the planet."



While attending the climate summit a few weeks ago, Cree student Erica Violet Lee playfully took a selfie with her tongue sticking out and Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall behind her. (Twitter)

Is that not an indirect threat to the safety of young, intelligent, indigenous women? Why are we not outraged at comments like that? Erica's tweet after posting that comment: "Settler violence toward Iskwewak for daring to be visible, playful, resistant. Why is my tongue so unsettling?"

When something like taking a selfie with your tongue sticking out during a climate change conference causes that much of a racist backlash, we have to ask ourselves: what kind of country do we live in?

There is a lot of talk about reconciliation in this country, and I often wonder if Canadians are ready for it. There cannot be reconciliation without the continued exposure of the

truth — the truth being that Canada has a race problem. That race problem is amplified every day in every media outlet in this country that posts indigenous-related stories. The CBC just recently shut down the comments section because of that race problem.

Raising my daughter to be fierce

Which makes me question: what kind of country are we raising our indigenous girls in? I love my daughter and want the world for her. I recently was teaching her about climate change and how it affects people. Her heart is there. I want her to grow up thinking that she is safe and that she doesn't have to worry about people attacking her without knowing who she is — in person or online.

I also want her to grow up without fear. I want her to grow up with the support of the community, and the strength to believe that she can be a leader. We need to teach our daughters to be strong, and we need Canadians to support indigenous women.

I would hope that we are raising daughters who are going to be able to challenge current structures and systems, but I hope that they are able to do that in a country that is not going to threaten their lives for it.

With the announcement of the arrest of the man accused of murdering Tina Fontaine, I have to have another conversation with my daughter.

I need to tell her that she is loved, and I also need to tell her that there are still people out there that she needs to be worried about.

We all need to reflect on what type of country we want to raise our daughters in. Tina Fontaine was a girl. A young girl who was failed at every level.

I would love to believe that as a country, Canada can do better. We shouldn't have to raise our daughters in fear. We should be raising them to be fierce.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/raising-my-indigenous-daughter-in-canada-1.3361913>

Highway of Tears gets \$3M for transportation safety plan

Funding comes after a recent meeting between transportation officials and First Nations leaders in the area

[CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 14, 2015 1:31 PM PT Last Updated: Dec 14, 2015 2:50 PM PT



Advocates and families of the women and girls who disappeared along Highway 16 connecting Prince Rupert and Prince George have been calling for public transportation along the route for years. (Jonathan Hayward/Canadian Press)

The B.C. government is committing \$3 million to improve public transit along B.C.'s so-called Highway of Tears.

The funding comes following [a recent meeting between transportation officials](#) and First Nations leaders in the area, to address concerns about the number of women who have gone missing or been murdered while hitchhiking Highway 16, which runs between Prince George and Prince Rupert.

The new transportation safety program includes:

- \$1.6 million over two years to extend or enhance B.C. Transit services on a cost-shared basis with local communities.
- \$750,000 over three years to purchase and operate vehicles on a cost-shared basis with local communities.
- \$150,000 over three years for a First Nations driver education program for community vans.
- \$500,000 over two years for highway infrastructure safety improvements including webcams and transit shelters.
- Better coordination of existing services and schedules to expand user eligibility.

"There is no one size fits all approach to addressing the challenges along the corridor and this action plan provides flexibility for communities to determine how to best apply new funding to meet their specific needs," said Transportation and Infrastructure Minister Todd Stone.

Shane Gottfriedson, the regional chief for the B.C. Assembly of First Nations, endorsed the plan.

"I am heartened to hear of this important first step to take action on the safety and transportation for our brothers and sisters of the north," said Gottfriedson.

"It is imperative that indigenous women do not continue to face the fear and the risk of violence when they travel."

A new nine-member advisory board made of local First Nations and municipal leaders will oversee the implementation of the plan in the coming months.

It's been three years since the [Missing Women's Inquiry](#) highlighted the need for better public transit in northern communities.

An [RCMP investigation identified 18 women and girls](#) who went missing or were murdered along Highway 16, or the nearby highways 97 and 5, since 1969.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/highway-of-tears-transit-1.3364841>

Grieving families seek voice in missing, murdered aboriginal women inquiry



A tear rolls down the cheek of Bernadette Smith, from Winnipeg as she talks about the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women inquiry on Parliament Hill in Ottawa on Tuesday December 8, 2015. (Adrian Wyld / THE CANADIAN PRESS)

Chinta Puxley, The Canadian Press

Published Monday, December 14, 2015 4:21AM EST

Last Updated Monday, December 14, 2015 7:11PM EST

WINNIPEG -- For years, Bernadette Smith says, she felt like she was waging a battle on her own.

When her sister, Claudette Osborne, disappeared in 2008, Smith held vigils with a handful of people who knew her pain, put up "missing" posters with family members and, more recently, organized a group to drag Winnipeg's Red River for clues about the fate of missing and murdered indigenous women.

"I remember feeling so angry and crying and going: 'Where is everybody? Why doesn't our community care about our women?'" Smith recalls. "Does a life not matter?"

Osborne's four children and Smith still don't have the answers they are looking for, but the search has become a little less lonely.

And when an inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women gets underway, as early as the summer, Smith and other families hope their voices will be heard and given the weight they deserve.

"It's the families that are living this every day and breathing this," Smith says. "They're the ones who know what could have prevented what's happened to their loved ones."

The RCMP issued a landmark report last year which put the total of missing and murdered aboriginal women at 1,181. Indigenous women make up 4.3 per cent of the Canadian population, but the report found they account for 16 per cent of female homicides and 11.3 per cent of missing women.

For years, the families whose loved ones are part of those statistics called for an inquiry, but the previous Conservative government steadfastly refused.

The Liberals came to power in October and last week new Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett announced an inquiry the shape and scope of which is to be determined in the next few months. It will rely heavily on input from families, she said.

"Families are hugely important to us in the design of the inquiry, who leads it, the terms of reference, the role of families throughout, the role of ceremony," Bennett said in an interview. "We need their advice in every aspect."

"It's been unbelievably important to us that we get this inquiry right."

Many families are asking for the power to formally advise the inquiry. They want to ensure financial assistance for those who want to participate, as well as guarantee culturally appropriate support services.

"It's a lot different than any other kind of commission or inquiry," says Beverley Jacobs, lead researcher on Amnesty International's report on missing and murdered indigenous women. "It's very spiritual and emotional ... We're not talking about a pipeline."

Jacobs, who is a former president of the Native Women's Association of Canada, has a personal interest in the upcoming inquiry.

Her cousin, Tashina General, was 21 when her body was found in a shallow grave on the Six Nations reserve in southern Ontario. General was four months pregnant and had been strangled. Her former boyfriend was convicted of second-degree murder, but a new trial recently was ordered upon appeal.

An inquiry has to have built-in ceremonies that take into account that a dead woman's spirit is disrupted every time her name is mentioned, Jacobs says.

"They're resting (and) we're bringing up some of the horrific issues that they had to endure. They're very close by. Having that ceremony, feasts and elder involvement has to be an integral part of the inquiry process."

The inquiry should also learn from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission by travelling to often-remote communities to better understand the victims, she suggests.

Families, she says, will need culturally appropriate support services as they relive the trauma of losing their mothers, daughters, aunts or sisters.

"It's to ensure that no harm is done to any person that's involved."

Grand Chief Sheila North Wilson, who represents northern Manitoba First Nations, says the process must be shaped by those who have fought so long for the issue to be recognized.

Families who have held vigils to bring attention to the disappearance of indigenous women are the reason why an inquiry has been called, she says. The inquiry should not only honour them, but listen to them carefully.

"It would give us all the lay of the land -- how police react to them, how they have to do ... the searches themselves," says North Wilson, head of Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak. "They know what it feels like to be patronized."

For Smith, the inquiry wasn't something she lobbied for.

A government committed to reducing violence against indigenous women could use the estimated \$40 million the inquiry will cost on programs addressing the root causes highlighted by previous studies, she says.

But now that an inquiry is coming, she wants to be part of it.

"We've waited this long."

Direct Link: <http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/grieving-families-seek-voice-in-missing-murdered-aboriginal-women-inquiry-1.2699051>

'Society should be horrified:' Some cases of missing, murdered aboriginal women



The Canadian Press

Published Monday, December 14, 2015 12:23PM EST

WINNIPEG -- A few of Canada's almost 1,200 missing and murdered indigenous women:

Claudette Osborne -- Missing

Age: 21 when she disappeared July 2008 in downtown Winnipeg

From: Norway House Cree Nation, Man.

Children: Four

Arrests: None

Sister Bernadette Smith: "My sister was portrayed as a sex-trade (worker), drug addict, aboriginal, female -- all these things you had to read through before you could even find out who she was. We've come a long way but we still have a long way to go."

Tashina General -- Murdered

Age: 21 in 2008 when her body was found in a shallow grave

From: Six Nations, Ont.

Children: Four months pregnant

Arrests: Her ex-boyfriend was convicted of second-degree murder after admitting he "snapped" and strangled General, but a new trial was ordered in September on appeal.

Cousin Beverley Jacobs: "She was a really athletic, energetic young woman. A lot of friends, very traditional, attended ceremonies. It wasn't just the family that was impacted. It was the whole community."

Jennifer Catcheway -- Missing

Age: 18 when she vanished in 2008 on her way to Portage la Prairie from Grand Rapids, Man.

From: Skownan First Nation, Man.

Children: None

Arrests: None

Mother Bernice Catcheway: "Who wants to find their child in a garbage dump? Nobody wants that. But on the other hand, I'll take her. I'll take her wherever she is."

Myrna Letandre -- Murdered

Age: 37 when she disappeared in 2006

From: Fairford First Nation, Man.

Children: None

Arrests: Traigo Andretti pleaded guilty to second-degree murder in the killing and dismembering of Letandre in a Winnipeg rooming house. He was already serving a life sentence for killing his wife, Jennifer McPherson.

Cousin Patty Sinclair: "Now she's numbered among the missing and murdered indigenous women of Canada. The hardest part is having to forgive this man that took her from us. Maybe now, Myrna can rest in peace."

Tina Fontaine -- Murdered

Age: @ 15 in August 2014 when her body, wrapped in a bag, was pulled from the Red River in Winnipeg.

From: Sagkeeng First Nation, Man.

Children: None

Arrests: Raymond Cormier charged with second-degree murder. Police say he and Fontaine frequented the same residence on Winnipeg's east side.

Winnipeg deputy police Chief Danny Smyth: "The murder of this child -- and let's not forget she was a child -- has shocked and outraged our community. And I think that outrage has resonated across the nation."

Direct Link: <http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/society-should-be-horrified-some-cases-of-missing-murdered-aboriginal-women-1.2699556>

Violence against indigenous women is woven into Canada's history

An inquiry into 1,200 murders and disappearances must examine the deep-seated racism of the country's colonial roots and institutions



Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is presented with a blanket after addressing the Assembly of First Nations Special Chiefs Assembly in Gatineau. Photograph: Chris Wattie/Reuters

[Jaskiran Dhillon](#) and [Siku Allooloo](#)

Monday 14 December 2015 15.10 GMT Last modified on Monday 14 December 2015 19.07 GMT

The Canadian prime minister, Justin Trudeau, announced on 8 December the launch of a [national inquiry](#) into the approximately 1,200 documented cases of indigenous women and girls who have gone missing or been murdered over three decades. The inquiry is a state-led response to the alarming rate of gender violence against indigenous communities across the country – a crisis that has resulted in [international scrutiny](#) of Canada's failure to uphold the human and political rights of indigenous peoples.

The announcement was received with mixed emotions. There was applause from some quarters, including members of parliament and leaders from Canada's largest aboriginal organisation, the Assembly of First Nations, who praised Trudeau for his move towards "a total renewal of the country's relationship with its aboriginal population".

Among indigenous families and advocates there was an understandable sense of relief and anticipation that the authorities will finally be forced to act on unsolved cases, potentially put an end to the epidemic of violence, and raise awareness about the deep-seated racism that is woven into the fabric of Canadian society. Affected families, survivors and community groups have been pushing for government action on this crisis for decades, but authorities have so far failed to respond in any meaningful way.

Others have [raised serious concerns](#) about Canada's ability to deliver justice to indigenous communities at all.

If you step back and look at the bigger picture, this is what becomes visible: the call for a national inquiry exists against the backdrop of Canada's ugly and violent colonial history. It is easy to link Canada's failure to acknowledge and engage with this injustice to its last prime minister, Stephen Harper, who repeatedly refused to support an inquiry throughout his nine-year tenure and [infamously stated](#), "Um, it's not really high on our radar, to be honest." Harper, though, is only one in a long line of colonial leaders who have actively participated in, and benefited from, the widespread normalisation of violence against indigenous peoples.

In fact this story of violence, erasure and complicity dates back to before Canada became [Canada](#).

The socio-political realities that make it possible for indigenous women, [girls](#) and [two-spirit people](#) (who are almost always left out of reports), to be murdered and disappeared in Canada originates in the [colonial violence](#) that enabled [the creation of the settler state](#) and the expansion of capitalism. Canada could not have been built without it. Colonial acquisition of lands was enacted through targeted gender violence to destroy indigenous peoples' connection to their territory by attacking those at the heart of that connection: indigenous women. It also served to debase their power and autonomy, fragment societies and curtail indigenous nations' ability to create life.

The contemporary inheritance of this colonial history is reflected in the conditions of systemic vulnerability in which all indigenous people have to live, but are experienced most acutely by women, girls and two-spirit people. The systems of extractive industry, education, healthcare, child welfare, social services and the prison system are all fraught with racism. This reality makes advocating for change on any single front extremely challenging.

The state and criminal justice system have completely and utterly failed to respond to these murders and disappearances. This, along with active victim-blaming, has created a

culture of impunity for men to rape and murder at will. State-sanctioned safety and protection for indigenous peoples is an illusion at best.

But this is not only a matter of failures in police protection: across Canada, the [Royal Canadian Mounted Police](#) and [local law enforcement agencies](#) are active perpetrators of racism and violence against indigenous nations, with [particular brutality being](#) shown towards indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people. The [criminal justice system](#) and its officers are central to the problem.

So how can the Canadian state be held accountable for its complicity in colonial gender violence – both past and present – when it is the driving force behind this inquiry? It is crucial that we demand an answer to this question. The indigenous affairs minister, Carolyn Bennett, has said: “The end goal of the inquiry is to find concrete action that will be able to stop this national tragedy.” If there is to be any hope of this goal being met, the inquiry must be held to account and made to confront the deepest root causes of the crisis. Anything short of this is an affront, will add further injury to indigenous peoples, and is a denial of state culpability. The inquiry must amount to more than just another list of [unimplemented recommendations](#). And we must continue to invoke a sense of social and political history so we are honest about where this violence comes from and don’t lose sight of what is at stake.

Let’s also be clear that the national inquiry is just one strategy in this fight for justice that has been led by those who have already lost so much and still have everything to lose: individual survivors, families of the missing and murdered, and those who remain targets of colonial gender violence. These efforts extend to a greater movement for decolonisation and freedom that is being led by indigenous peoples across Turtle Island; a movement that promotes large-scale land restitution, indigenous youth leadership, community-led initiatives to fight ongoing dispossession and trauma, artistic and creative interventions, and the revitalisation of indigenous governance systems.

Regardless of this inquiry, indigenous nations will continue to take action to protect life and secure justice – with or without the support of the Canadian state.

Direct Link: <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/dec/14/violence-indigenous-woman-canada-history-inquiry-racism>

8 of 54 murders of aboriginal women remain unsolved, OPP says

Commissioner hopes releasing information will spur new leads from public in some cases

CBC News Posted: Dec 16, 2015 10:22 AM ET Last Updated: Dec 16, 2015 1:10 PM ET



Ontario Regional Chief Isadore Day said he hopes the report into murdered and missing indigenous people in the province can be a first step in mending relations between First Nations and the OPP. (CBC)

Eight of the 54 murders of indigenous women investigated by the Ontario Provincial Police remain unsolved, according to a report released by the force today.

Of the 126 men murdered within OPP jurisdiction, one remains unsolved, while 39 indigenous men remain missing.

Of the 46 solved female indigenous homicides:

- Nine were murdered by family member.
- Seventeen were murdered by their partner or spouse.
- Nineteen were murdered by someone who knew the victim.
- One was of unknown circumstances.

A separate part of the report focuses on homicides of indigenous men and covers the period 1978 to December 2014.

During that period, there were 126 homicides of indigenous men in OPP jurisdiction, with one remaining unsolved. Of the 125 cases that were solved:

- Thirty-five were murdered by family members.
- Ten were murdered by their partner or spouse.
- Seventy were murdered by persons known to victim.
- Nine were of "unknown circumstances."
- One is not available.



Ontario OPP Commissioner Vince Hawkes hopes the release of information about missing and murdered First Nations people investigated by the OPP will create new leads in the cold cases. (CBC)

Of the eight missing indigenous women reported to the OPP who remain missing, the force says foul play is possible or suspected in one case. Of the 39 cases that involve missing indigenous men, police believe foul play is possible or suspected for 22 cases.

Police consider a case solved when a criminal charge is laid.

The OPP began reviewing all cases involving aboriginal victims starting in 2011.

The report, which can be downloaded [here](#), includes a compilation of case file information, except in a few cases where families didn't consent to their release.

Families hope for 'justice and closure'

Ontario Regional Chief Isadore Day attended the news conference and commended the OPP for turning their attention to the cases. He said family members of many of the victims have been frustrated with how the cases were investigated.

"Families felt more extensive investigations could have taken place, and noted that justice seems to work differently for First Nations and non-First Nations citizens," said Day.

He said the report shows a commitment by the OPP to bring "justice and closure" to the unsolved cases.

Day said relations between Ontario's First Nations and the OPP have often been strained. He mentioned the 1995 killing of Dudley George, who was shot by an OPP officer during a protest at Ipperwash park.

"Far too many First Nations people are victims of the worst crimes imaginable," he said.

Bring back human element

Deputy Grand Chief Denise Stonefish, of the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians, said she encouraged other police forces to take similar steps.

"Ontario First Nations leadership want to bring back the human element to the missing and murdered indigenous women tagline," she said.

OPP Commissioner Vince Hawkes said he's hopes that releasing the information will spur new leads in some of the cases.

"It's about opening up the doors and saying 'We want more,'" said Hawkes. "We want to hear from people, and we're hoping for some positive outcomes."

The OPP do not believe any of the murders are "serial in nature."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/opp-missing-murdered-aboriginal-people-1.3367495>

OPP investigates more murders of Indigenous men than women: report

'Mix intergenerational trauma, isolation, lack of housing, alcohol abuse, things are going to escalate'

CBC News Posted: Dec 17, 2015 9:26 AM ET Last Updated: Dec 17, 2015 12:36 PM ET



Norman Beauvais helps indigenous people in Sudbury navigate the court system. He is an Aboriginal court worker with the N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre in Sudbury. (Markus Schwabe/CBC)

A **new report** from the Ontario Provincial Police shines a different light on the issue of missing and murdered indigenous people.

In a first-of-its kind report released Wednesday, OPP say more than double the number of First Nations men have been murdered compared to First Nations women.

OPP say 54 indigenous women in the province were murdered in the last 50 years. But in a shorter time period, more than double that many indigenous men were murdered — a total of 126 in 36 years.

The report also found that while OPP are looking for eight missing First Nations women, they are still searching for 40 First Nations men.

"There has been a lot of discussion across our country into murdered and missing aboriginal women and girls," said Dave Truax, director of criminal investigations for the OPP. "While we were doing this undertaking we decided to include both genders in order to get a true picture."

The report only covers the cases OPP was involved in from 1956 to 2014.

Only so much families can do

An aboriginal court worker with the N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre in Sudbury said he doesn't know why the numbers are higher for men, but does see many aboriginal men struggle.

"If they're becoming homeless or move off the reserve, it seems as though they're forgotten," Norman Beauvais said.

"If they don't have family in urban areas and they go missing, the family tries to contact them. That's where it stops."

There is only so much that families can do, he continued.

"If they're from five hours north of here, to come into Sudbury and start looking for them is a daunting task."

Beauvais said the OPP's numbers are surprising. He says he doesn't think there is much awareness about where Indigenous men are going.

He said he sees a lot of men who are homeless and struggle on a daily basis, adding that about 60 per cent of them either live on the streets or "couch surf."

Intergenerational trauma

Many First Nations men who find themselves homeless in urban centres won't access resources available to them, Beauvais said. That means it might be months before someone identifies who they are and where they might be from.

First Nations have a long history of trauma, which is still impacting their pride, he said. Many start using drugs or alcohol to cope.

"To think that First Nations people are doing it to themselves, or it happens just amongst first nations people, you would have blinders on to think that, because it happens all over," Beauvais said.

"But when you mix intergenerational trauma, isolation, lack of adequate housing, alcohol abuse, things are going to escalate. And things get out of control. I would like to think there's an understanding that, if people were put in those situation, there isn't anything else that they could do differently."

The issues in First Nations communities aren't just aboriginal problems, they're Canadian problems, he added.

"Our country is beginning to realize it's a problem, and it's a bruise on our country."

The OPP are hoping the report might prompt someone to come forward with new information on some of the unsolved cases.

Report highlights

- OPP have been collecting the information for this report since 2010.
- It covers 324 municipalities and the 38 First Nations communities that the OPP polices. The data does not cover investigations in the 52 independent municipal and nine self-directed First Nations police services in Ontario.
- Between 1957 and 2014, there were eight missing Indigenous females reported to the OPP who remain missing.
- Presently, there are 40 cases that involve missing Indigenous males, since 1956.
- For the period of 1964 to December 2014, inclusive, in OPP jurisdiction, there were 54 homicides involving Indigenous females
- For the period of 1978 to December 2014, inclusive, in OPP jurisdiction, there were 126 homicides of Indigenous males

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/sudbury/opp-report-missing-murdered-men-1.3369388>

Special Topic: Residential Schools, TRC, & '60s Scoop

Celine Cooper: Reconciliation with First Nations should be a national priority

[Celine Cooper, Special to Montreal Gazette](#)

Published on: December 13, 2015 | Last Updated: December 13, 2015 2:00 PM EST



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and AFN National Chief Perry Bellegarde laugh as they talk before the beginning of the Assembly of First Nations Special Chiefs Assembly in Gatineau, Tuesday December 8, 2015. Adrian Wyld / THE CANADIAN PRESS

“What does reconciliation look like? Does it matter to you?”

That question is posed on the [home page of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#), which will make public its final report on the history and legacy of Canada’s residential school system on Dec. 15. Ahead of its release, the Liberal government has committed to renewing a nation-to-nation relationship between Canada and indigenous peoples, one based on “[the recognition of rights, respect, co-operation and partnership](#).”

This is a significant moment in our country’s history. Last week, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau joined First Nations leaders who gathered in Gatineau for the Assembly of First Nations Special Chiefs Assembly. In a speech, he introduced a five-point plan for honouring this commitment. It includes a promise to launch a national public inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women; lift the two per cent cap on federal funding for First Nations programs and replace it with a new fiscal arrangement; and implement all 94 recommendations that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission made public in June.

A few hours after Trudeau’s announcement, Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Carolyn Bennett, Minister of the Status of Women Patricia Hajdu and Minister of Justice Jody Wilson-Raybould held a news conference on Parliament Hill. Asked whether the government would be open to repealing the Indian Act, Bennett said “absolutely.”

The impact of such a move should not be underestimated. Since being passed by Parliament in 1876, few pieces of legislation in Canada have provoked as much public debate and anger as the Indian Act. It has been [amended several times](#) and purged of the most discriminatory sections. Yet while it has been broadly recognized as a paternalistic and damaging statute, many First Nations and government leaders remain divided on how

to move forward. Today, the legislation remains a key element in the management of aboriginal affairs.

If the Indian Act is genuinely up for debate, reconciliation will involve being open to new approaches to indigenous representation, control of territory and governance.

A range of priorities related to land, treaty rights and sovereignty must be factored in, too. There are more than 60 different indigenous nations in Canada distributed across some 600 communities. Approximately 57 per cent of First Nations people in Canada live off reserve, and Canada's urban indigenous population is growing at almost five times the rate of its non-indigenous population.

This conversation will also involve reimagining the internal borders that at present define Canada, including Quebec. Obviously, this won't be easy. Recall when Innu leader Ghislain Picard, Chief of the Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador caused a commotion at the Parti Québécois's national council back in November. In his speech he stated "I am Innu, and I am a sovereignist." PQ delegates who believed Picard was declaring himself in favour of Quebec sovereignty met his words with booming applause. He then hastened to clarify that he was not talking about sovereignty for Quebec, but for his own nation.

My intention isn't to single out the Parti Québécois for criticism. I highlight it because it's a good example of the persistent bi-national (French/English or Quebec/Canada) logic at the heart of conversations about national sovereignty or territorial integrity in Canada.

It is also an example of why — at minimum — reconciliation requires that all Canadians hold a baseline understanding of indigenous history, including contemporary issues, languages and cultures of First Nations, Métis and Inuit people.

As Canadians come to terms with the truths of the residential school era and its harmful legacy, renewing the relationship between Canada and indigenous peoples will be one of the most important commitments the federal government can make both now and in the foreseeable future. We are all on this journey together.

To me, part of moving toward reconciliation means changing the way we think and talk about Canada, our shared history and future.

Yes, it matters.

Direct Link: <http://montrealgazette.com/opinion/columnists/celine-cooper-reconciliation-with-first-nations-should-be-a-national-priority>

TRC to release final report on Canada's residential school legacy

Exhaustive investigation took more than six years as part of class-action settlement

By Kristy Kirkup, The Canadian Press Posted: Dec 14, 2015 9:59 AM ET Last Updated: Dec 14, 2015 9:59 AM ET



Commission chairman Justice Murray Sinclair will release the final report from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Tuesday, Dec. 15, 2015. (Adrian Wyld/Canadian Press)

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which documented the haunting legacy of Canada's residential schools, is set to present its final report Tuesday to the parties in the class-action settlement that led to its creation.

Justice Murray Sinclair, who has led the TRC's exhaustive investigation over the past six years, said each member of the agreement will receive a copy of the massive findings to complete the commission's obligation.

The Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement was reached after former residential school survivors took the federal government and churches to court with the support of the Assembly of First Nations and Inuit organizations.

The arrangement was designed to help repair the lasting damage caused by the schools, and — in addition to compensating survivors — to explore the truth behind the government-funded, church-operated assimilation program that existed in Canada from the 1870s to 1996.

After unveiling its summary in June, which included the key finding that the residential school system facilitated nothing short of "cultural genocide," the TRC will now release hard copies of the full report.

Each copy weighs about 25 pounds, Sinclair estimates. But that's nothing compared to the work's emotional heft.

"Every time I stand in front of a crowd — particularly of survivors, but a crowd generally — and I talk about the issue of residential schools, I always wonder if I can get through it," Sinclair said.

"It is always such a challenge because it ... has been a very demanding piece of work and that alone would be enough to cause difficulty to talk about. But more importantly, there's so many people who have been part of this who are no longer with us."

94 recommendations

Among the commission's 94 recommendations was a national public inquiry to examine the phenomenon of missing and murdered aboriginal women — a demand long resisted by former prime minister Stephen Harper.

Last week, the new Liberal government set the wheels in motion by kicking off the "design phase" of the long-awaited inquiry.

The pre-inquiry consultation involves speaking to victims' families and aboriginal organizations.

"They've taken steps to carry out that commitment and that's important," Sinclair said.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has also approached aboriginal issues in a more respectful manner, he added.

"In our calls to action, in our summary report, we did talk about the importance in leadership and the importance of there being a national voice around reconciliation," he said.

"It is also about changing the way we talk to and about each other."

Sinclair, the first aboriginal judge appointed in Manitoba, said he's hopeful there will be a broad discussion about the inquiry and its terms of reference, and that the inquiry is tasked with exploring whether systemic issues are at play.

"I think really the emphasis is going to be to try to answer the big questions of what happened and why?" Sinclair said.

"It is not just the families, it is also Canadian society. I think Canada needs to know as well why is this happening and is it happening elsewhere? That's a bigger question ... is this going on around the world?"

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/truth-reconciliation-residential-schools-indigenous-1.3363827>

Truth and Reconciliation Commission final report points to 'growing crisis' for indigenous youth

Indigenous youth are overrepresented in Canada's prisons and child-welfare system

By Susana Mas, [CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 14, 2015 4:59 PM ET Last Updated: Dec 15, 2015 12:24 AM ET



The Truth and Reconciliation Commission will make public on Tuesday its final report documenting the history and legacy of Canada's residential school system, raising serious concerns for current and future generations of First Nations, Inuit and Métis children.

The final report, titled *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future*, is the culmination of thousands of hours of heart-wrenching testimony heard in more than 300 communities over a span of six years, from more than 6,000 indigenous women and men who were abused and lived to tell their stories.

"The survivors showed great courage, conviction, and trust in sharing their stories, which, collected here, are now a part of a permanent historical record, never to be forgotten or ignored," writes Justice Murray Sinclair, the chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, in the final report obtained by CBC News.

A summary report released by the commission in June [made 94 recommendations](#), including changes to policies and programs.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who will be present when Sinclair unveils the final report in Ottawa on Tuesday, has [committed to implementing all the recommendations](#),

including the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and a national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.

The government [announced last week the first phase](#) in a process that would lead to a much-awaited inquiry.

3,200 recorded deaths

The commission heard testimony of the effects that over 100 years of mistreatment had on 150,000 First Nations, Inuit and Métis children. It is a moving and tragic historical account of what happened to indigenous children, many of whom were physically and sexually abused in government boarding schools.

What's more, the commission found records showing that 3,200 indigenous children died from tuberculosis, malnutrition and other diseases resulting from poor living conditions.



A 1945 investigation in parental complaints at the Gordon's Reserve school in Saskatchewan reported that for one dinner children were fed a single slice of bologna, potatoes, bread and milk. (General Synod Archives/Anglican Church of Canada)

In an exclusive interview with CBC News Network's *Power & Politics*, Sinclair said he estimates the number of children who died to be much higher because burial records are "so poor."

"I'm absolutely convinced the number is much higher, perhaps as much as five to 10 times as high as that," Sinclair told host Rosemary Barton.

'Staggering' legacy

The final report also paints a grim and more fulsome picture of "the growing crisis" of indigenous youth over-represented in Canada's prisons and child welfare system.

"The legacy of residential schools and government actions towards indigenous people over the years since Confederation is staggering. Every social condition measurable in

Canadian society places aboriginal people at the most disadvantaged position of all people in the country," Sinclair told CBC News.

'The legacy can be seen in the myths, misunderstandings, and lack of empathy many Canadians openly display about indigenous people, their history, and their place in society.' - *Justice Murray Sinclair, chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*

"They have the highest unemployment rate, the biggest gap in income earnings, the number of aboriginal children in care, the number of aboriginal people who are incarcerated, the health problems and the health illnesses, the life expectancy rates are the lowest in the country, housing is poor, water supplies are poor — just the social living conditions that aboriginal people face are attributable to the way that they've been treated and mistreated by governments over the years and by society."

Sinclair said much of it is directly traced back to the experience of indigenous children in residential schools.

The commission also found:

- Fewer than 50 former residential school staff members were convicted for sexually or physically abusing indigenous students — an "insignificant" number, according to the report, given the 37,951 claims filed for compensation from survivors as of Jan. 31, 2015.
- The harm done to Métis children who attended residential schools "was substantial," but Métis as a people were excluded from the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. Part of the reconciliation process will have to address and rectify "this damage."



"Removed from their families and home communities," Sinclair said in the final report, "seven generations of aboriginal children were denied their identity through a systematic and concerted effort to extinguish their culture, language and spirit."

"It is clear that residential schools were a key component of a Canadian government policy of cultural genocide."

"The legacy can be seen in the myths, misunderstandings, and lack of empathy many Canadians openly display about indigenous people, their history, and their place in society," said Sinclair.

While the final report marks "one of the darkest, most troubling chapters in our nation's history," it also turns the page on a new chapter in the relationship between indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians.

"Reconciliation will not be easy and it will take time, but to make it happen, we must believe it should happen," said Sinclair.

Reforming child welfare system

The high number of incarcerated indigenous youth and "the even more dramatic overrepresentation" of indigenous children in the care of child-welfare agencies are connected, the report found, and are in part explained by the way indigenous people were treated in residential schools.

There are more than 300 child-welfare agencies in Canada operating under provincial and territorial jurisdiction.

"Proof of the effectiveness of First Nations child and family service agencies is still preliminary," said the commission, "but anecdotal evidence and case studies suggest that First Nation agencies are more effective than non-aboriginal agencies in providing service to First Nation clients."

While indigenous people now have "considerable" control of child-welfare services, according to the commission, funding is still lacking for many aboriginal agencies.

The final report notes that Canada's "child-welfare crisis" has not gone unnoticed by the international community.

In 2012, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed to Canada its concern about the frequent removal of children in Canada from families as a "first resort" in cases of neglect, financial hardship, or disability, the report said.

The commission urged on all levels of government — federal, provincial, territorial, and aboriginal — to work together to reform Canada's justice and child welfare systems.

Indigenous and Northern Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett [said in a speech to First Nations](#) gathered in Gatineau., Que., last week that the government has begun working on and seeking support for an "overhaul" of the country's child welfare system.

Bennett reiterated her government's commitment [after her first formal meeting](#) with the families of missing and murdered indigenous women in Ottawa on Friday.

"There is a real problem of ripping children from their families, from their communities, and that we need to look at this system very seriously," she said.

"We have to start with the children — protect the children — that's what child welfare is supposed to be."

"These children need protection ... and we will try to get this system fixed."

"We hope to get to work on that early in the new year," Bennett said.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/truth-and-reconciliation-final-report-1.3361148>

Manitoba First Nations family advocate hopeful as TRC final report released

'This is just optimism that I never had,' Cora Morgan says

[CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 15, 2015 3:12 PM CT Last Updated: Dec 15, 2015 9:58 PM CT

Manitoba's First Nations family advocate is excited about the prospect of changes in Canada's child-welfare system after the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report was released Tuesday.

"This is just optimism that I never had because working in the system, it's been really hard, and we've only been around for not even seven months now," said Cora Morgan, who was appointed the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs First Nations advocate for children in care earlier this year.

"So we see those challenges, but with this broader understanding and national understanding, I'm hoping it effects change in Manitoba."

The TRC report details the impacts of Canada's residential schools and calls for action in a number of areas, including child welfare.

The high number of incarcerated indigenous youth and "the even more dramatic overrepresentation" of indigenous children in the care of child-welfare agencies are connected, the report says, and are in part explained by the way indigenous people were treated in residential schools.

The commission has made 94 recommendations that Prime Minister Trudeau's government has already pledged to implement.

"To know that this Liberal government has committed to fulfilling all 94 [recommendations] is very exciting — especially for me in my role, because the first five recommendations are around child welfare," Morgan said.

She added that she hopes Canadian society as a whole will gain a better understanding of the factors that contribute to the high number of indigenous children in care.



Cora Morgan, the First Nations family advocate with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, says she hopes a broader understanding of the issues raised in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report will effect change in Manitoba's child-welfare system. (CBC)

"I choose to believe that in the days of residential school, mainstream society wasn't aware of what was happening to these children, and I choose to believe that during the Sixties Scoop era, that mainstream society wasn't aware," she said.

"So what my hope is now is that mainstream society and broader Canada understands this child-welfare system in Canada."

There are more than 300 child-welfare agencies in Canada operating under provincial and territorial jurisdiction.

The commission is urging all levels of government — federal, provincial, territorial and aboriginal — to work together to reform Canada's justice and child-welfare systems.

Not a matter of 'forgiving the white people'

Dylan Cohen grew up in Manitoba group homes.

"We were apprehended because of neglect," said Cohen. "My mother was ripped out of her home and placed her into a home -- placed into a white family who abused her, sexually, physically and emotionally, her whole upbringing. She didn't have the capabilities or the skills to parent children."

At 13, he was placed in the CFS system along with his brother.

Cohen, now 20 years old, said he's excited there's a promise to work toward reconciliation and thinks Tuesday's news is a step in the right direction.

"All those kids that age out every day, everyone that is left behind by the system can't just get over it. It's not a matter of just getting an education. It's not a matter of walking away from colonialism and forgiving the white people," he said. "We need to work together and acknowledge that indigenous people and the kids in CFS need support to keep going."

TRC's 5 child-welfare recommendations

The commission's five recommendations related to child welfare are:

1. We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to commit to reducing the number of aboriginal children in care

2. We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with the provinces and territories, to prepare and publish annual reports on the number of aboriginal children who are in care, compared with non-aboriginal children, as well as the reasons for apprehension, the total spending on preventive and care services by child-welfare agencies and the effectiveness of various interventions.

3. We call upon all levels of government to fully implement Jordan's Principle.

[Jordan's Principle, named for Jordan River Anderson of Norway House Cree Nation, seeks to ensure First Nations children with complex health needs who are caught in jurisdictional fights between the federal, provincial and band governments are not denied access to public health services.]

4. We call upon the federal government to enact aboriginal child-welfare legislation that establishes national standards for aboriginal child apprehension and custody cases

5. We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial and aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate parenting programs for aboriginal families.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/trc-final-report-cfs-manitoba-1.3366506>

Justin Trudeau pledges reconciliation in Canada after Aboriginal abuse

The forcible separation of some 150,000 children from their families over more than 100 years was an attempt to end the existence of Aboriginals in Canada, a report concluded



Justin Trudeau said last week it was time to renew the relationship between Canada and its Aboriginals, and has set up an inquiry to investigate a trend of missing and murdered indigenous women.

Tuesday 15 December 2015 20.46 GMTLast modified on Tuesday 15 December 201520.59 GMT

Justin Trudeau has pledged to work towards full reconciliation with Canadian Aboriginals as he accepted a final report on the abuses of the government's now-defunct system of residential schools for indigenous children.

The forcible separation of some 150,000 children from their families over more than 100 years was an attempt to end the existence of Aboriginals as distinct legal, social, cultural, religious and racial entities in Canada, the long-awaited report by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada concluded.

"Our goal, as we move forward together, is clear: it is to lift this burden from your shoulders, from those of your families and communities. It is to accept fully our responsibilities and our failings, as a government and as a country," Trudeau told hundreds of residential school survivors as the report was released Tuesday.

Trudeau, elected in October, said last week it was time to renew the relationship between Canada and its Aboriginals and has set up an inquiry to investigate a trend of missing and murdered indigenous women.

The commission, launched as part of a settlement with survivors, said Canada pursued a policy of cultural genocide because "it wished to divest itself of its legal and financial obligations to Aboriginal people and gain control over their land and resources".

The report documented horrific physical abuse, rape, malnutrition and other atrocities suffered by many of the children who attended the schools, typically run by Christian churches on behalf of Ottawa from the 1840s to the 1990s.

The report, the result of a six-year investigation into the matter, identified 3,201 student deaths at residential schools but said it is probable that many more deaths went unrecorded.

“Many students who went to residential school never returned. They were lost to their families ... No one took care to count how many died or to record where they were buried,” the report said.

The legacy of the residential school system persists as many Canadian aboriginals struggle to recover from generations of family separation.

Aboriginals, who make up about 5% of Canada’s population, have higher levels of poverty and a lower life expectancy than other Canadians, and are more often victims of violent crime, addiction and incarceration.

Former prime minister Stephen Harper in 2008 apologized to the survivors of the residential schools.

The group made 94 reconciliatory recommendations, including special human rights and anti-racism training for public servants.

Direct Link: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/15/justin-trudeau-pledges-reconciliation-canada-aboriginal-abuse>

Inuit leaders call for healing and education in wake of TRC final report

'What needs to happen now is the Canadian public has to accept the recommendations as fact'

By Sima Sahar Zerehi, CBC News Posted: Dec 16, 2015 4:30 AM CT Last Updated: Dec 16, 2015 9:58 AM CT



A group of Inuit women and children stand outside the school at the Pangnirtung Federal Hostel in 1927. The Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report was released on Tuesday. (F.H. Stringer/Library and Archives Canada/e002342690)

Inuit leaders say now that the Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission's long-awaited final report is out, it's time for healing, education and action.

Commission chair Justice Murray Sinclair formally ended the six-year commission Tuesday with the release of its final report and 94 recommendations for action.

The extensive final report shows how residential schooling in the North played a major role in the rapid transformation of the region's traditional lifestyles and economies by taking Inuit, Métis and First Nations children tremendous distances away from their families and stripping them of their languages and traditional skills.

"We've been waiting for it for a very, very long, long time," said James Eetoolook, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.'s vice-president. He attended a residential school for a year.



'It is part of our Canadian history, this history is not all great, there's a lot of madness and a lot of sadness in it as well,' said James Eetoolook Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.'s vice-president.

"I think we need to push our government in order to keep on top of it rather than putting it on the back burner."

Eetoolook said Nunavut Tunngavik is looking forward to meeting with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in the near future to work on the action plans associated with the report.

Airing these dark chapters in Canadian history will go a long way in addressing the trauma from the past, said Eetoolook.

"I know it's not going to put an end to the disaster that was created by the Canadian government," he said.

"I think we're going to see some healing come out of it."

Eetoolook said he is eager to see the truths in the report be incorporated into how history is taught.

"It is part of our Canadian history. This history is not all great; there's a lot of madness and a lot of sadness in it as well."

'We can forgive, but we cannot forget'

Jack Anawak, a former residential school student and a former Nunavut MP, said he believes that it's time for better education that fosters cultural understanding of Inuit, Métis and First Nations.

"We have come to the understanding that yes we can forgive, but we cannot forget," he said.



Natan Obed, president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, poses with John Banksland, a member of the TRC survivors committee from Inuvik, in Ottawa Tuesday at the release of the final Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission report. (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami)

"What needs to happen now is that the Canadian public has to accept the recommendations as fact."

Rebecca Kudloo, president of the Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, attended residential school as a child, and was in Ottawa for the release of the report.

Kudloo said that the problems associated with the abuses of residential schools will continue until Inuit populations are given the resources needed to assist with the healing process.

"It was nice to hear that the government is committed to the next steps and healing but the resources are scare," she said.

Kudloo said she hopes that a part of the action plan will include funding social services that can help fight the legacy of trauma.

Natan Obed, president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, was in Ottawa for the release of the report and was one of the leaders who made a speech at the event that resulted in a standing ovation.

"The truth that we now have in these volumes, and the truth that has been said over the course of this entire process should change us," said Obed.

"It should reach our hearts...it should affect us not just today but throughout the entirety of our lives."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/inuit-truth-reconciliation-final-report-1.3366487>

Justin Trudeau says he'll engage Pope on apology for church's role in residential schools

PM committed to implementing all 94 of Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 'calls to action'

By Susana Mas, [CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 16, 2015 6:54 AM ET Last Updated: Dec 16, 2015 3:01 PM ET



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said he will seek a formal apology from Pope Francis for the Roman Catholic Church's role in residential schools, a day after the Truth and Reconciliation Commission made public its final report into the legacy of the schools.

The **commission has called upon the Pope** to apologize to residential school survivors and their families for the Catholic Church's role "in the spiritual, cultural, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children in Catholic-run residential schools."

Trudeau's comments came during a news conference after he met the leaders of five national aboriginal organizations in Ottawa on Wednesday to discuss the findings of the commission.

Asked if he would urge the Pope to apologize, Trudeau said "different churches, including the Catholic Church, are very much engaged with the Truth and Reconciliation

Commission, and I am certainly intending to work with the Catholic Church, including with the Holy See, to move forward with implementing that recommendation — to ask him directly to engage with this issue, yes."

"The Catholic church is the only church that has not formally apologized to the survivors."- Perry Bellegarde, national chief for the AFN
Trudeau said while he could not compel the Pope to issue an apology, he was prepared to have that conversation with him, given the opportunity.

"That means I'm not going to pretend that it is my job to order other governments or other organizations to do anything, but I certainly look forward to a constructive engagement where we can address this issue because quite frankly, there are multiple levels of different organizations that have a role to recognize in this terrible part of Canada's past."

"I look forward to having a conversation with His Holiness about this," Trudeau said on Parliament Hill.

Former prime minister Stephen **Harper met with Pope Francis at the Vatican in June** and drew his attention to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 calls to action that include the request for an apology.

Harper was criticized by the opposition parties and other critics for not being more direct.

First Nations seek audience with pontiff

The following groups joined Trudeau for Wednesday's news conference:

- The Assembly of First Nations.
- The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples.
- Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami.
- Métis National Council.
- The Native Women's Association of Canada.



An aboriginal woman places her hand on Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's heart before the start of a meeting with national aboriginal organizations on Parliament Hill Wednesday. (Adrian Wyld/Canadian Press)

Perry Bellegarde, the national chief for the Assembly of First Nations, said an apology from the pontiff would help redress the legacy of residential schools and advance reconciliation between indigenous people and the Roman Catholic Church.

"We are going to continue our efforts to get an audience with the Pope," Bellegarde said, "because really, the Catholic church is the only church that has not formally apologized to the survivors."

"Getting an audience with His Holiness is very important to bring about healing and reconciliation for their role in the imposition of the residential school system."

Indigenous and Northern Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett, Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould and Status of Women Minister Patricia Hajdu — Trudeau's lead ministers for the government's inquiry into murdered and missing indigenous women — also were part of the talks.

Reporters also saw Health Minister Jane Philpott, Heritage Minister Mélanie Joly and Employment Minister MaryAnn Mihychuk entering the meeting Wednesday morning.

Trudeau has vowed to work with the leaders of the aboriginal organizations, the provinces and territories, parties to the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement and other key partners in responding to the TRC's 94 "calls to action."

"I'm announcing that we will work... to design a national engagement strategy for developing and implementing a national reconciliation framework, including a formal response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action," he said Wednesday.

In June, the [commission put forward 94 ways](#) that Canada can redress the legacy of residential schools and advance reconciliation.

Trudeau has committed to implementing all 94 calls to action.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/aboriginal-residential-schools-trudeau-meeting-1.3367026>

'Years of pain and anguish': Sask. First Nations leader on TRC report

By [Leena Latafat](#) Reporter Global News



Watch above: FSIN Chief Bobby Cameron sits down with Lisa Dutton to offer his thoughts on the final report from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and what needs to happen moving forward.

December 15, 2015 5:50 pm

SASKATOON – Saskatchewan First Nations leaders are hoping the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) marks the path to healing and forgiveness. Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) Chief Bobby Cameron says the findings confirm what many have known for years — that many children sent to residential schools faced serious danger and several never returned.

“Let’s not forget the many people who have died in residential school. Many unsolved murders. You’ll hear it from the survivors. Many of them have witnessed their peers getting beaten so bad, where all of a sudden they disappeared. Questions unanswered to this day,” said Cameron.

He adds that the country needs to come together to ensure that future generations don’t have to go through the same abuse.

“We have to forgive. But more importantly we have to heal. And to ensure that this never ever happens to our children, our grandchildren and the unborn. That’s the focus and priority,” he said.

The commission heard from thousands of survivors and found that disease, accidents, fires, and physical and sexual abuse are only some of the dangers children in residential schools had to battle with.

Cameron describes residential schools as “years of pain and anguish” and says it’s important to start looking ahead.

“Now that time has come to begin that healing journey. And some of our First Nations people are on that path, but there are many others who still require that support, that healing, those prayers,” he said.

The final TRC report is [available on their website](http://globalnews.ca/news/2403264/years-of-pain-and-anguish-sask-first-nations-leader-on-trc-report/).

Direct Link: <http://globalnews.ca/news/2403264/years-of-pain-and-anguish-sask-first-nations-leader-on-trc-report/>

TRC's first 5 recommendations all address child welfare

Dark legacy lives on in Canada’s child and family services system, final report says

By Lenard Monkman, [CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 15, 2015 9:13 PM ET Last Updated: Dec 15, 2015 9:13 PM ET



The dark legacy of Indian residential schools lives on in Canada's child and family services system, according to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission which, in its [final report released today](#), called for sweeping changes to the country's child welfare system.

"The schools were intended to sever the link between aboriginal children and parents," the report states.

"They did this work only too well. Family connections were permanently broken."

The report's first recommendation calls upon "federal, provincial, territorial, and aboriginal governments to commit to reducing the number of aboriginal children in care." Its first five recommendations all address child welfare.

Statistics Canada says nearly half of the 30,000 children in the system are indigenous.

In Manitoba, there are over 10,000 kids in care — 85 per cent of which are indigenous.

A recent report says Winnipeg police deal with around 550 missing persons reports a month, and 83 per cent of them involve kids in care.

The Children's Advocate for Manitoba's First Nations says social workers are seizing one newborn baby a day and, in Saskatchewan, 484 children connected to the CFS have died over the past two decades.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/truth-reconciliation-child-welfare-1.3366724>

Canada vows 'full reconciliation' with indigenous peoples

15 December 2015



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has pledged "full reconciliation" with Canada's indigenous peoples after a report detailed decades of abuse.

Speaking at the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report on Tuesday, he said he wants the government to accept responsibility.

The report found a school system for indigenous children separated families and tried to weaken their culture.

Over 3,000 children died while at the schools over the last century.

Six years in the making, the nearly 4,000-page report found they died at a higher rate than the general population and many were buried in unmarked graves.

Former Prime Minister Stephen Harper apologised to survivors in 2008, but some critics saw the apology as hollow.

Mr Trudeau said the final report builds on Mr Harper's apology and "sets us squarely on a path to true reconciliation".

"Our goal, as we move forward together, is clear: it is to lift this burden from your shoulders, from those of your families and communities," said Mr Trudeau, speaking to survivors of the schools in Ottawa. "It is to accept fully our responsibilities and our failings, as a government and as survivors."



Government-led policy amounted to cultural genocide, the **report** found.

The commission found the policy was enacted because the country "wished to divest itself of its legal and financial obligations to Aboriginal people and gain control over their land and resources."

From 1840 to 1996, more than 150,000 First Nations, Metis and Inuit children were separated from their families and placed in the government-run schools, in an attempt to rid them of their "Indian" culture.

Many endured emotional, physical and sexual abuse, with the final report detailing cases of rape and malnutrition.

The schools were run by Christian churches. Many survivors are still recovering from having their families separated for decades.

Mr Trudeau has set up a government inquiry to investigate missing and murdered indigenous women.

He said last week the Canadian government must renew its relationship with indigenous peoples.

"It is my deepest hope that this report and its findings will help heal some of the pain...The Government of Canada sincerely apologises and asks forgiveness of the Aboriginal peoples of this country for failing them so profoundly," Mr Trudeau said.

"We have a plan to move towards a nation-to-nation relationship based on rights, respect, cooperation and partnership, and we are already making it happen."

He pledged that the government would enact all of the report's recommendations, beginning with the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The government will also work with indigenous leaders on a "national reconciliation framework", he said.

Direct Link: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-35105339>

Aboriginal leaders leave meeting with Trudeau encouraged reconciliation achievable

National News | December 16, 2015 by APTN National News | 0 Comments



APTN National News

OTTAWA -Following the first meeting on the road to reconciliation Aboriginal leaders said they are encouraged by what Prime Minister Justin Trudeau told them behind closed doors.

“We wanted to say how proud we were to be part of the conversations today, to see people starting to do things in a different way,” said Dawn Harvard, president of the Native Women’s Association of Canada. “I think we’ve seen that here today, is what can be accomplished if you go in with that desire to dialogue.”

Five leaders from various national Aboriginal organizations met with Trudeau to try and work out a plan to implement the recommendations contained in the Truth and Reconciliations June report. The commission’s final report was released Tuesday in Ottawa.

Natan Obed, president of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami said he is encouraged by the meeting with Trudeau and members of his Cabinet.

“What we were looking for is a renewed Inuit to Crown relationship,” said Obed. “That relationship can only happen with the type of meetings we had this morning, and the respect for the, for all Inuit organizations in a way that we haven’t seen in a number of years.”

He said he looks forward to “renewing” the relationship in a tangible way.

“I think the time for rhetoric is over and the time for action is now. I’m really happy to be part of the transition and the implementation of a meaningful new relationship between Inuit and the Government of Canada,” he said.

Clement Chartier, president of the Metis National Council said he was glad to meet with Trudeau but gave the new prime minister a message.

“The Metis Nation is pleased that the TRC, the Canadian government has dealt with Indian Residential Schools. This morning, again, we reminded the Prime Minister that the Métis residential schools have not been dealt with yet,” said Chartier. “(We were) given assurances that our issues will be looked at. So I believe that’s very critical to us.”

Chartier is a survivor of a Metis residential school, having went for 10 years. He supports the government’s call for a national inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous.

“Myself, when I was 15-years-old at a boarding school, my mother was killed. No justice has yet been done for her,” he said.

Trudeau said the purpose of the Wednesday morning meeting was to set that direction.

“We talked about a number of specific issues,” said Trudeau. “But also engaged directly on how we’re going to work together to address these problems concretely. This is an engagement that is going to take years, decades and generations, perhaps.”

But as Trudeau, his ministers, Aboriginal leaders and the grassroots move forward it’s important to ensure this first meeting wasn’t just a meeting to have more meetings, said the prime minister.

“It’s important to start with a true sense of collaboration and partnership and that’s exactly what we cemented this morning,” he said.

Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde said success will be measured in results.

“How are you going to measure success? Well, once you start getting rid of the 135-plus boil water advisories, you know, that’s going to be success,” he said. ” So success will be measured when that gap starts to close, and so that all peoples have the same opportunities to good jobs, good education and training and employment opportunities.”

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/12/16/aboriginal-leaders-leave-meeting-with-trudeau-encouraged-reconciliation-achievable/>

Truth and reconciliation report goes well beyond residential schools: Walkom

Justin Trudeau promised to implement this report before reading it. Some recommendations are pretty bold.



It will be interesting to see if, in the end, Justin Trudeau goes as far as this very ambitious and Reconciliation Commission has suggested, writes Thomas Walkom.

By: [Thomas Walkom](#) National Affairs, Published on Thu Dec 17 2015

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has promised to implement all 94 recommendations of the aboriginal [Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#). It’s a tall order.

Tall because the commission, which was set up to focus on abuse suffered by aboriginal children in Canada’s former residential school system, deals with far more than residential schools.

The [3,231-page final report](#) released Tuesday is a sweeping indictment of the entire history of Canada’s treatment of aboriginal people.

Among other things, it calls for a new relationship between indigenous people and Canada, one that would allow aboriginals self-determination, more control over resources and a direct role in making and interpreting laws that affect their collective rights.

Media coverage of the commission has tended to focus on the horrors suffered by native children forcibly removed from their families and sent to boarding schools — many of them run by mainstream Christian churches.

Those stories are indeed horrible. But the three-person commission chaired by Manitoba Justice Murray Sinclair did far more than hear testimony from former residential school students and staff.

It also focused on reconciliation, a term it defines broadly.

The commission's view of the past — of the historical relationship between aboriginals and non-aboriginals — is not rosy.

It places that relationship in the context of a European imperial system that deliberately tried to replace indigenous peoples in the Americas with white settlers.

This system, it says, persisted in Canada after Confederation and was expressed in what the commission calls “cultural genocide” — a deliberate government policy that, until the 1960s, was designed to forcibly assimilate aboriginals into mainstream society.

Residential schools, the commission says, were no accident. They were aimed at destroying aboriginal cultures that mainstream society viewed as inferior.

True reconciliation, it says, can be achieved only when aboriginals regain their self-respect and when non-aboriginals understand the worth of indigenous culture.

How does this happen?

Many recommendations involve education. Aboriginal history should be taught to all children. Lawyers should learn about traditional aboriginal law. Journalism students should be taught aboriginal history in order to help them avoid tired stereotypes.

Such recommendations are politically easy. Provincial governments may be reluctant to spend money teaching aboriginal history. But they won't oppose the idea outright.

Nor will any sensible politician oppose recommendations calling on government to improve the health of aboriginal people (although, again, some may balk at spending money).

The Pope may or may not follow the commission's suggestion that he apologize for the Roman Catholic Church's involvement in residential schools. But it cost Trudeau nothing Wednesday to say he'd ask the Pontiff to do so.

Some recommendations would be expensive to implement — such as one calling on government to alleviate poverty in order to reduce the number of aboriginal youth in jail.

But the toughest promise to be those dealing with political structure, resources and law.

True reconciliation, the commission says, can be accomplished only if Canada adopts a new vision “that fully embraces aboriginal peoples' right to self-determination within, and in partnership with, a viable Canadian sovereignty.”

Noting that the Supreme Court has already ruled that aboriginal communities have a broad level of control over their traditional lands, the commission argues that indigenous people must be able to realize their full economic potential if reconciliation is to be achieved.

Larger first nations, it says, should be able to make “laws within their own communities.”

Moreover, the whole nature of law should be rethought, first to integrate traditional aboriginal legal rules into Canadian practice and second to allow indigenous people “to become the law’s architects and interpreters where it applies to their collective rights and interests.”

That sounds a lot like a separate level of government and courts.

Trudeau signed onto the commission’s bullet-point list of recommendations in June when they were first released. That was well before he saw the final report that explains them.

It will be interesting to see if, in the end, he goes as far as this very ambitious commission has suggested.

Thomas Walkom's column appears Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday.

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2015/12/17/truth-and-reconciliation-report-goes-well-beyond-residential-schools-walkom.html>

‘It hurts’: Many left out of Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation

By [Leslie Young](#) Investigative Reporter Global News



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau responds to a question about why his government is fighting residential school survivors in court.

As Prime Minister Justin Trudeau talks about a new relationship with Canada’s indigenous peoples, many find themselves on the outside looking in.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission process and residential school settlement did not include Métis, people who attended day schools rather than residential schools and people who attended residential schools in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The government is fighting two of those groups in court as class action lawsuits seek the same kind of compensation offered to other school survivors.

Josie Penny watched Tuesday's TRC event in tears.

But there was no reconciliation for her, or recognition for her years in a residential school in Labrador.

"It's the way it's always been," she said.

"We're very seldom ever included in Labrador. It just seems like nobody cares. It hurts. If everybody else can get the attention that they so rightly deserve, as we also deserve and are not getting, it hurts."

Penny testified in a St. John's court as part of the ongoing class action lawsuit there.

It wasn't easy. She wishes there was another way to resolve things that didn't involve the witness stand.

"When you go on the witness stand and you're fighting against the Government of Canada, it's very scary," she said.

Clément Chartier is also among those left out: The president of the Métis National Council spent 10 years in a residential school but his experience hasn't been recognized.

"This morning we again reminded the Prime Minister that the Metis residential schools have not been dealt with yet," he said at a press conference Wednesday.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission Chair Justice Murray Sinclair acknowledged Tuesday that the process isn't comprehensive.

"There are many thousands of indigenous people whose treatment over the years mirrors that of those in residential schools but who have not yet been fully acknowledged," he said.



Assembly of First Nations national chief Perry Bellegarde vowed Tuesday to keep pressure on the government to recognize these people.

“They were forgotten. they were left out. So we’re seeking justice for all that have been hurt by this travesty and we will keep supporting it. And I will say sometimes you need a legal strategy to put enough pressure on so there’s a political strategy going forward.”

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said that his government is looking into an “appropriate response” to the Newfoundland and Labrador survivor and other court cases.

“We know that it does no one any good for issues like this to have to be settled in court. We need to be able to settle them in robust and substantive conversations.”

Indigenous and Northern Affairs minister Carolyn Bennett acknowledged Tuesday that the government has more on its plate than the 94 TRC recommendations, and suggested they may move to end the ongoing class actions.

“Our government’s view of reconciliation is bigger than the court-directed mandate of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission,” she said.

“We do believe that getting things out of the courts is going to be the way forward and a way that’s less painful for so many survivors in some of these complex situations that didn’t end up being in the original class action.”

The government has yet to offer timelines or concrete plans for settlements. In the meantime, government lawyers are fighting these residential school survivors in court.

Penny says she’s hopeful that the cases will be resolved. “The new government sounds promising. Whether or not they’re going to follow through it’s really hard for us to say. It’s hard for us to trust anybody at this point.”

Direct Link: <http://globalnews.ca/news/2405231/whos-left-out-of-canadas-truth-and-reconciliation/>

Special Topic: International Indigenous Populations

Grants to help put UNM Native American students on teaching track

*Updated: 12/09/2015 7:00 PM | Created: 12/09/2015 6:50 PM
Colton Shone, KOB Eyewitness News 4*

The University of New Mexico wants to recruit more Native American students to become teachers, and its College of Education just received more than \$1 million in grant funding to make it happen.

Native American educators say the program is being implemented because there is a large disconnect with the number of Native students in New Mexico and the number of Native teachers, something they hope to change.

There are 22 different Native American tribes in the state, and university researchers say about 11 percent of students in New Mexico public schools are Native American. But less than 2 percent of the teachers are.

"For many of our students...teaching is not always been something that has been promoted as a critical need area," said Christine Simms, Ph. D, with the College of Education.

Simms says the program intends to put Native teachers in schools to give non-Native students an indigenous perspective and give Native students a better opportunity to succeed.

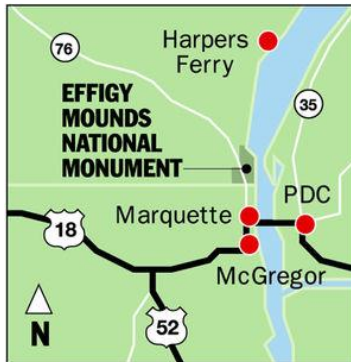
"Then you share traditions, you share language, you share many cultural experiences," said Glenabah Martinez, Ph. D, also with the College of Education.

The program recruits current UNM students who want to become teachers and provides them with stipends to help them attend courses taught by Native American faculty.

The three grants for the program will last for the next couple of years.

Direct Link: <http://www.kob.com/article/stories/s3987503.shtml#.Vm8DfF76gwD>

UPDATE: Retired official charged with stealing remains from Effigy Mounds



Effigy Mounds National Monument is located in Allamakee County, just north of Marquette, Iowa.

Posted: Thursday, December 10, 2015 9:45 am | *Updated: 12:20 pm, Thu Dec 10, 2015.*

Associated Press |

UPDATE

IOWA CITY — A long-retired National Parks Service official has been charged with stealing ancient Native American remains from a museum collection at a sacred tribal burial site in Iowa and keeping them for more than 20 years.

Former Effigy Mounds National Monument superintendent Thomas Munson was charged Tuesday with embezzlement of government property after a lengthy investigation that tribes and archaeologists have followed closely. He's expected to be arraigned Wednesday at the federal courthouse in Cedar Rapids.

Munson, 76, has been under investigation since 2011, when he returned a box of prehistoric bones to a museum on the grounds of the 2,500-acre park in northeast Iowa. The box contained fragments of skeletons, such as teeth, jaws and leg bones, that are believed to be 500 to 2,000 years old and that were discovered there in the 1950s. Investigators later found additional boxes of remains at his home.

Munson has said he took the bones and stored them in the garage of his Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin home. His motivation isn't clear, but some tribes have said they believe Munson was trying to circumvent a law that took effect later in 1990 that required museums to return some remains and burial objects to tribes. Some archaeologists — Munson isn't one — believed the law would harm research.

The revelation outraged the 12 tribes affiliated with the site, who were already angry at monument officials for illegally building boardwalks and other structures throughout it. Located in the wooded hills along the Mississippi River, the park features 200 Native American burial and ceremonial mounds, some of which are shaped like animals.

Neither Munson nor his attorney, Leon Spies, immediately responded to voice messages seeking comment. Spies has said that Munson, who served as superintendent from 1971 to 1994, was a dedicated federal employee and is cooperating with investigators.

Iowa's state archaeologist, John Doershuk, said the criminal charge filed against Munson was important and overdue because it wasn't just ancient relics that were taken, but the remains of more than a dozen actual people.

"These are people and there are living peoples who care deeply about these remains, just as most modern Americans would about their ancestors," he said.

Doershuk said the remains "were treated very disrespectfully" when they were hastily removed. They were jumbled together and then poorly stored and have degraded somewhat as a result, he said. The sealed remains are being held as evidence, but they are expected to be returned to tribes for reburial once the case concludes.

Another former monument employee, Sharon Greener, has said that Munson directed her to pack up the bones in cardboard boxes when she was a part-time ranger in 1990 and that Munson drove off with them. She said she kept an inventory of what was taken and that when she later learned the removal wasn't handled properly, she told future superintendents what had happened.

Munson denied having the bones over the years. But that changed in 2011 after Greener brought the missing remains to the attention of a new superintendent, Jim Nepstad, who launched an inquiry. Soon, Munson returned the first box.

The National Park Service later accused Greener of a "lack of candor" for her role in the removal, eventually firing her in 2013. But in a settlement last year, the agency reinstated Greener with back pay, then allowed her to retire early.

Direct Link: http://www.thonline.com/news/tri-state/article_09dc93ba-9f4f-11e5-b7a0-8f626c54449e.html

New Mexico Opens First Native American State-Certified Business Incubator

By new mexico economic development department • Dec 10, 2015



Church Rock, NM -- Today, New Mexico Economic Development Secretary Jon Barela presented the Navajo Tech Innovation Center business incubator in Church Rock with state-certification, making it the first Native American state-certified business incubator in the state. The New Mexico Economic Development Department (NMEDD) will also invest \$18,500 toward the new business incubator. The Navajo Tech Innovation Center includes 27,000 square feet for both the incubator facility and production space next door with a training room and arts center.

"It is Governor Susana Martinez and my goal that rural parts of the state have the same opportunity as urban areas to assist startup companies and support entrepreneurs," Secretary Barela said. "I am proud of the nearly five years of work that has gone into developing the Navajo Tech Innovation Center which will mentor Navajo businesses as they move from the incubation facilities to their own space, creating jobs and new wealth in the Navajo Nation." The Innovation Center is already serving 27 client businesses. "Entrepreneurship is critical to our economy and we are extremely excited to be part of the State's incubator network," said Benjamin Jones, entrepreneurial director for the Navajo Tech Innovation Center. "Entrepreneurs create jobs and new revenue; they are typically dedicated to staying where they are and have chosen a business model accordingly; and they also generally provide indigenous products and services which new companies from elsewhere are unfamiliar with." The incubation concept will accelerate the presence of small businesses in the Navajo Nation connected with the state's existing certified incubators. Certification will enable closer collaboration and exchange of resources with the State as well as the Navajo Nation. The Navajo Technical University (NTU) submitted the certification application and is managing the incubator. NMEDD assisted with the certification process. Small Business incubators provide startups with targeted support and resources to help launch a successful business. Incubators house and support businesses as they develop at their own pace. Studies have shown that incubated businesses have a survival rate of 87%, while only 44% of small businesses that work in isolation survive. Incubator-based enterprises are also more attractive to prospective investors. The incubator certification process and requirements provide "best practice" standards to insure the sustainability of the incubator. The new Navajo Tech Innovation Center brings the total to six active certified incubators in New Mexico.

Direct Link: <http://krwg.org/post/new-mexico-opens-first-native-american-state-certified-business-incubator>

John Trudell, poet, activist for American Indian rights, dies at age 69



John Trudell, then 25, speaks to reporters about a 1971 Native American occupation of a remote former Nike site near Richmond, Calif.

John Trudell, a Native American activist who became a spokesman for American Indian protesters during their 1969 occupation of Alcatraz Island — and whose personal grief-inspired poetry was celebrated by famous fans such as [Bob Dylan](#) — died Tuesday. He was 69.

Trudell, who ran a radio broadcast from the island called Radio Free Alcatraz, died of cancer at his home in Santa Clara County in Northern California, according to a trustee for his estate.

He was born Feb. 15, 1946, in Omaha. His father was a Santee Sioux. Trudell grew up near the Santee Sioux reservation and served in the Navy on a destroyer off Vietnam.

In 1969, Trudell, who had studied radio and broadcasting at a college in San Bernardino, joined American Indians occupying the former federal prison on Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay.

The activists, equipped with bedrolls and potato salad, had hitched boat rides to the bleak, chilly outcropping in the middle of the night.



In this Dec. 1, 1969, file photo, John Trudell poses for a photo on the steps leading to the prison atop Alcatraz Island in the San Francisco Bay.

They claimed the prison as a Native American cultural center, citing 19th century treaty rights. They wrote "INDIANS WELCOME" on the old walls and offered to buy the island with glass beads and red cloth.

They set up a school, clinic and sweat lodge, and invited the Interior secretary to a powwow.

The occupation drew media coverage and substantial official sympathy — at least at first. Actress Jane Fonda paid a visit. Berkeley community radio station KPFA gave the protesters a radio transmitter. The California State Assembly unanimously passed a resolution supporting them.

A Los Angeles Times editorial opined that "perhaps the occupiers have a point."

Government officials opted to wait it out. As the months wore on, temperatures dipped near freezing on the 12-acre island and hunger stalked the protest.

A 13-year-old girl among the occupiers died after falling down a stairwell. The government shut off power to a barge the group had used. A fire ripped through buildings.

Trudell publicly vowed to stay. But the protest eventually dwindled. The last 15 demonstrators were removed by federal officers after 19 months. The occupation won widespread attention and was credited with launching a new wave of Native American activism.

Trudell remained a well-known counterculture figure and continued his protests. He went on to serve as national chairman of the activist American Indian Movement from 1973 to 1979.

By then, the FBI had built a 17,000-page dossier on him. "He's extremely eloquent," one FBI memo read, "therefore extremely dangerous."

In 1979, while Trudell was demonstrating in Washington, D.C., his pregnant wife, Tina Manning, three children and mother-in-law were killed in a fire at her parents' home on the Duck Valley Indian Reservation in Nevada. The fire occurred hours after Trudell had burned an American flag at the FBI building in Washington.

Trudell and others said they suspected government involvement. But a cause was never determined.

"One world ended abruptly and completely and could not be resurrected or re-put together," Trudell told the Los Angeles Times a few years after.

The loss of his family impelled him to write, he said. His poetry was promoted by Dylan and others. Through the rest of his life, Trudell had a coterie of famous fans.

Robert Redford likened him to the Dalai Lama. Jackson Browne, Val Kilmer, Bonnie Raitt and others offered praise.

Trudell later had a relationship with Marcheline Bertrand, the mother of actress Angelina Jolie, before she died in 2007 of cancer. She was an executive producer of a 2005 documentary about him called "Trudell." A Times critic faulted the film for its worshipful style but echoed its insistence on the importance of Trudell's story to counterculture history.

Trudell combined spoken words and music on more than a dozen albums, including one released earlier this year. His fans included Kris Kristofferson, who paid tribute to Trudell with the 1995 song "Johnny Lobo," a tune Kristofferson still performs live. Trudell also appeared in movies, including 1992's "Thunderheart," starring Val Kilmer, and 1998's "Smoke Signals," starring Adam Beach.

In 2012, Trudell and singer Willie Nelson co-founded Hempstead Project Heart, which calls for the legal cultivation of hemp for clothing, biofuel and food.

Trudell considered poetry to be first among the arts. "When one lives in a society where people can no longer rely on the institutions to tell them the truth, the truth must come from culture and art," he said.

Direct Link: <http://www.latimes.com/local/obituaries/la-me-john-trudell-20151210-story.html>

Equator Prizes Put Heroic Indigenous Enterprises on the Map

[DOMINIQUE GODRÈCHE](#)

12/10/15

A million acres of traditional land regained. A successful fight against a dam project that would have decimated sacred territory. A once-barren remote mountain region converted into thriving habitat and sustainable agriculture.

These are just three of the 21 projects, culled from 1,461 nominations out of 126 countries, that [won the 2015 Equator Prize](#), considered the Academy Awards of sustainable development. The awardees were feted in Paris on December 7, during the international climate summit known as COP21, at a gala and ceremony emceed by award-winning actor Alec Baldwin and attended by the likes of famed anthropologist Jane Goodall and United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Victoria Tauli-Corpuz. Each award includes US\$50,000 to help fund the initiatives. This year marked the first year that the Equator Prize is being given to groups from Afghanistan, Guyana and Iran, noted the United Nations Development Programme

(UNDP), which first announced the awards in September. For the recipients, being recognized publicly was perhaps even more important than the money.

“The Equator Prize is a big hope for us, a dream come true,” said Farkhunda Ateel Siddiqi, gender officer of the Rural Green Environment Organization, an Afghan community adaptation and poverty reduction program that has restored degraded lands in a remote poor area about 300 miles from Kabul.

“We work in difficult and challenging security situations,” said her father, Ahmad Seyer, director of the organization. “So this award will help us, giving us courage, and allow us to work with more strength.”

Hailing from Africa, Asia and Latin America, the groups included the Environment Organization of Afghanistan (Movimento Ipereg Ayu Amazonia), Instituto Raoni of Brazil, and Muskita Asla Takantaka from Honduras, among many others. An impressive evening reception brought together Native populations from all over the world, ranging from nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to environmental activists such as Bianca Jagger, founder and president of the Bianca Jagger Human Rights Foundation.

“We will not be able to address climate change without indigenous people,” Jagger said. “Indigenous People’s rights have been at the heart of what I have done in my foundation for years, with communities in Brazil, Nicaragua, Peru and India.”

This was echoed by Tauli-Corpuz, who spoke of Indigenous Peoples' longstanding relationship with their lands.

“You cannot doubt the commitment of Indigenous Peoples to conserving their world,” said Tauli-Corpuz. “They are still saying the same thing and espousing the same values they have for hundreds of years, passed down from their ancestors.”

The ceremony brought these extraordinary projects under way in remote, isolated communities onto the international stage—highly symbolic and meaningful for the awardees.

“I am very happy and grateful,” declared Deborah Sanchez, from the Muskita Asla Takantaka project in Honduras, an indigenous federation that represents the Miskitus of the Honduran Mosquitia. “The recognition by the United Nations gives us a voice to the world. The small indigenous community of Miskitus is finally recognized, and we can say that we are working together for our rights.”

Other awardees included Movimento Ipereg Ayu (the name means, “I am strong, I know how to protect myself”) from Amazonia in Brazil, a resistance movement to block development of a Tapajos River dam complex, and heroic enterprises like the Afghan Green Rural environment Organization.

The ebullience was shared by Maria Leuza, from Amazonia, who spoke for many in saying, “We believe we will win our fight, as we are supported by others, and it is important to us.”

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/12/10/equator-prizes-put-heroic-indigenous-enterprises-map-162712>

Native American Fashion Gets Museum Show in Salem

By [Katherine Bowers](#), December 11, 2015



SALEM, Mass. — Buckskin and beads, feathers and fringe: fashion designers have been co-opting Native American adornment for centuries. Now, a new exhibit at the Peabody Essex Museum here showcases Native designers doing their own co-opting as well as putting edgy twists on Native signatures.

In the co-opt vein, the show boasts a “Louis Vuitton” quiver of arrows made by Cree artist Kent Monkman, who created his version of the Murakami LV canvas. There are Seattle artist Louie Gong’s “spirit wolf” Chuck Taylors and a show-stopping pair of Christian Louboutin boots hand-beaded by Jamie Okuma, of Luiseño/Shoshone-Bannock ancestry. Okuma designed the boots’ motif of swallows and rose hips based on childhood memories of life on the La Jolla Reservation in California.

Though they would make for a fabulous night out, none of Okuma’s shoes — which also included Giuseppe Zanottis transformed by beads — have been worn. Every pair has

been purchased by museums —the Smithsonian and the Nelson Atkins in Kansas City, Mo., to name two. Okuma sources European century-old beads and creates the design organically as she goes, without aid from a computer.

The show also includes beadwork from Choctaw artist Marcus Amerman, best known for beading a portrait of Janet Jackson for Rolling Stone magazine. For the Peabody Essex show, he supplied a cuff bracelet with a comic-art Tonto and Lone Ranger.

The show also includes pieces from some of fashion's big names, including Donna Karan's collaboration with artist Virgil Ortiz, who designed black-and-white Pueblo motifs for her 2003 collection. Karan met Ortiz at Santa Fe Indian Market, the annual show that's the Native American version of Art Basel, and invited Ortiz to intern in New York. There are also Isaac Mizrahi's 1991 "totem pole" column dress, a hefty pile of Iris Apfel turquoise and one of Ralph Lauren's 1980s Navajo coats.

The show has plenty of good reinterpretations of classic Native American motifs, including Margaret Wood's Navajo blanket dress and a traditional bandolier re-imagined as chic jewelry, slung across the body and fringed with horsehair tails and coins.

The exhibit opens with an installation of floating parasols from Taos Pueblo designer Patricia Michaels, a "Project Runway" finalist.

According to PEM curator Karen Kramer, contemporary Native American art is "massively under-recognized in the museum world, but is a burgeoning field." Kramer noted that the museum's Native American artifact collection dates to the 1700s, when spice trade ships would leave Boston, sail to the Pacific Northwest coast and remain there for two to three years, trading with Native tribes and stocking their ships with otter pelts, which were fashionable in the Far East.

"Native Fashion" runs through March 6.

Direct Link: <http://wwd.com/eye/design/native-american-fashion-museum-show-salem-10295977/>

House speaker: 'There is no plan B' for Native American cultural center



Legislators enter the unfinished American Indian Cultural Center in Oklahoma City for a tour in 2014. New legislation sets up a plan to provide \$25 million more for the project. [The Oklahoman file](#)

American Indian Cultural Center timeline

1994: Senate Bill 746 creates the Native American Cultural and Educational Authority and provides for the creation of the board. Appointments are made. Design and planning team selected. Concept development begins. Site investigation and selection process begins.

1996: NACEA begins to get state appropriations for operations.

1998: Site selected. Legislation authorizes a \$5 million bond.

2003: Legislation authorizes a \$33 million bond.

2005: The city of Oklahoma City donates the site land to the state.

2006: Construction begins.

2008: Legislation authorizes a \$25 million bond.

2012: Construction suspended pending additional funding.

May 2015: Gov. Mary Fallin approves up to \$25 million in state bonds to finish the facility.

Posted: Sunday, December 13, 2015 12:00 am | *Updated: 6:06 pm, Sun Dec 13, 2015.*

By BARBARA HOBEROCK World Capitol Bureau |

OKLAHOMA CITY — House Speaker Jeff Hickman said there is no alternative plan for the mothballed American Indian Cultural Center and Museum.

His comments came Wednesday following [an editorial in The Oklahoman](#) in which city leaders were critical of the feasibility of running the facility.

Legislation passed last session, House Bill 2237, sets up a plan to provide \$25 million more for the project and hand it to the city to operate. Hickman, R-Fairview, was the House author. Senate President Pro Tem Brian Bingman, R-Sapulpa, was the Senate author.

Creation of the center, located near Interstates 40 and 35 in Oklahoma City, was authorized in 1994. Construction started in 2006 but stalled as funding ran out. It was stalled in 2012 when lawmakers balked at providing additional state dollars.

“There is no plan B,” Hickman said. “This is plan B. There is no other option.”

Hickman last session made finding a resolution a priority.

“The truth is we explored every possible option the last couple of years, and this was the only viable plan we came up with that works,” Hickman said. “It works with another \$25 million of state money being given to them on top of the land. If this plan doesn’t work, there is no alternative.”

The state has already put in about \$100 million, according to House staff.

The city of Oklahoma City has hired consultants to review the proposal, said Jim Couch, city manager.

A subcommittee has been appointed to make a recommendation to the full council, which will take a vote, Couch said.

City officials have concerns about capital and operating costs and development around the site, Couch said.

Hickman said some of the concerns about the proposal are news to lawmakers.

“We have three consultants,” Couch said. “There are concerns we haven’t shared with the state. We are trying to decide if it is something we want to be involved in. We have professional consultants helping us so we can make a decision.”

Couch said the city was not involved in creating the legislation for the proposal.

“There were no negotiations with the state,” Couch said.

Supporters of the project have said they have \$40 million in private pledges to help finish the project.

Blake Wade, chief executive officer of the Native American Cultural and Educational Authority, said the private pledges are still available, despite an economic downturn.

“It has been very difficult for everybody,” he said. “They will stay with us as long as we do this important project for the state of Oklahoma.”

Wade said he has not seen the consultant reports and would like to review them.

Likewise, Hickman said the city is doing its “due diligence” on the project.

Bingman said that as long as the deal is on the table and until the city makes a decision, any talk of alternatives is premature. He said he will be monitoring the situation until the city makes a choice on the proposal.

Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett declined a request for an interview.

Direct Link: http://www.tulsaworld.com/news/capitol_report/house-speaker-there-is-no-plan-b-for-native-american/article_469c391c-de3a-5ea3-9081-8a48c6910925.html

Native Americans Dispel Stereotypes in Response to Adam Sandler Movie

The actors who protested Sandler’s ‘The Ridiculous 6’ speak out in a new video.

Dec 11, 2015

Jennifer Swann is TakePart’s culture and lifestyle reporter.

The actors who [walked off the set of an Adam Sandler movie](#) in April to protest its portrayal of Apache culture are back on screen together for a new project, but this time, they’re telling their stories. In a nearly three-minute video shot in New Mexico and released this week, four Native American actors who ditched Sandler’s production speak about their pride in their heritage, the importance of positive representation, and why they want to set a good example for the next generation.

The clip coincides with the Friday release of *The Ridiculous 6*, Sandler’s Netflix-produced Western that drew production boycotts because of what many actors saw as offensive, outdated stereotypes: characters named Beaver’s Breath and No Bra, and cartoonish images of peace pipes, teepees, and feathers. In a statement to TakePart at the time of the protests, [Netflix defended the movie](#), writing that it’s “a broad satire of Western movies and the stereotypes they popularized, featuring a diverse cast that is not only part of—but in on—the joke.”

But Loren Anthony, a member of Navajo Nation, wasn't amused. "Comedy is about laughing together, and believe me, Native Americans, we love to laugh. We enjoy it. It's good medicine," Anthony says in the clip above. "But when you tear down someone else, it is not funny." None of the four Native Americans featured in the video directly addresses the controversy with Sandler, but [actor and activist Allie Young](#) says that's not the point. When her friend Roj Rodriguez approached her about making the video, she was drawn to the idea that it would be a tool for raising cultural awareness—not a smear piece.

"I liked the direction he was going in—that this wouldn't be a video attacking or protesting against Adam Sandler, but rather a video that educates, informs, and asks others to please respect our culture and our dignity," Young wrote in an email to TakePart. "We felt that it was important to voice our heartfelt concerns and that we are doing this for our Native American youth and future generations of Native Peoples, who are still trying to overcome hundreds of years of marginalization."

More than [5 million people](#)—less than 2 percent of the American population—identify as Native American or Alaska Native, according to U.S. Census Bureau data. Native Americans face disproportionately high poverty rates compared with the general population, and their high-school dropout rates are nearly double the national rate, [according to an op-ed](#) President Barack Obama penned in *Indian Country Today Media Network* ahead of his visit to the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in North Dakota last summer. "These numbers are a moral call to action," Obama wrote, pledging to answer that call.

Young says she was motivated by her family to take to a stand against the film's portrayal of her culture. "I want to be an example for my nephews, for all of the young Native American youth," she says in the video. "I want them to be proud of who they are. Because with that strong cultural foundation and that strong identity, there's only one way, and that's up."

Direct Link: <http://www.takepart.com/video/2015/12/11/native-americans-ridiculous-six>

Warriors? Indians? State board considers mascot ban exception

Created on Thursday, 10 December 2015 18:08 | Written by [Paris Achen/Capital Bureau](#) |



PAMPLIN MEDIA GROUP FILE PHOTO - Molalla's mascot, the Indians, is one of several Native American mascots that might have to change under new state education board rules.

The fate of Molalla High School's rallying symbol — the Molalla Indian mascot — has been in limbo for the past five years since the Oregon Board of Education banned all Native American mascots beginning in January 2017.

Spurred by legislation last year, the state education board is considering a narrow exception to the ban. Only three out of 14 schools with such mascots would be eligible under the exception, and Molalla is one of them. Rogue River High School and Siletz Valley Early College Academy are the others.

"I think it is step in the right direction because it begins to give clarity to schools and tribes on the heels of a period of great uncertainty as the executive and legislative branches of government navigated this difficult issue," said Tony Mann, superintendent of the Molalla River School District.

"They're mascoting my culture without my consent."

The rule would allow Native American mascots when the name includes the name of a federally recognized tribe and the tribe signs an agreement with the school district to use the mascot. The school district also would have to show that its schools are located in a historic area of interest to that tribe. School districts would be prohibited from changing their mascots' names to meet the requirement.

A public hearing on the proposal is scheduled for 2 p.m. Dec. 21 on the second floor of the Public Service Building, 255 Capitol St. N.E. in Salem. The state education board plans to vote on the rule at its January meeting.

Divided community

School community members and native people, are divided on the proposal.

Critics of Native American mascots oppose any exception to the ban because they view the imagery as denigrating to native people. Even if the school community is well intentioned, they say, the depictions rarely reflect the local native culture.

Hillsboro resident Jacqueline Keeler, member of the Navajo Nation, said local Native American mascots depict Plains Indians rather than local tribes.

“They’re mascoting my culture without my consent,” Keeler said.

She said Native American mascots are rooted in racism. In its ban on Native American mascots, the state education board cited studies that showed such mascots had a negative impact on Native American students’ self-esteem and social identity development.

Some school community members say the exception fails to go far enough because it excludes schools that depict their Native American mascots with a sense of respect and pride.

Under the proposed rule, Warrenton High School’s mascot, the Warriors, would need to change because the name omits the name of a federally recognized tribe. Warrenton High School sits on land where the Clatsop lived, but the Clatsop have no federal recognition, said Mark Jeffery, superintendent of the Warrenton-Hammond School District.

“In the conversations I have had with community members, it’s clear that it’s not their perception the mascot was used to denigrate or harm Native Americans” Jeffery said. “They saw it as a symbol of strength and connection to our historic past.”

The Warrenton-Hammond School Board will follow whatever rule the state education board sets, Jeffery said.

“We just need some clarity,” Jeffery said.

Strengthening ties to tribes

Reyn Leno of the Grand Ronde Tribal Council said local tribes, rather than the state school board, should be allowed to decide whether a Native American mascot is appropriate. He said many people mistakenly believe the tribal council is behind the ban.

None of the school districts that could be eligible for the exception has reached a signed agreement with one of Oregon’s nine federally recognized tribes. Molalla River School District has been strengthening its relationship with the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde since 2013. The Molalla Indians are one of the banded tribes of the Grand Ronde, and the high school’s mascot represents that history and tie to the land, said Superintendent Mann.

The discussions with the tribe led to the school district adopting a fourth-grade curriculum in 2013, which teaches the history of local tribes.

“The overwhelming majority of community members with whom I have spoken and heard from are saddened by the thought that the mascot as it is and as it is currently represented would need to be abandoned,” Mann said.

Direct Link: <http://portlandtribune.com/pt/9-news/284976-161608-exception-proposed-for-native-mascot-ban>

Indigenous Denounce Exclusion of Rights at COP21

[Maria Clara Valencia](#)

12/11/15

The Greenpeace giant polar bear was brought to COP21 on Wednesday to add pressure on governments to make an ambitious climate deal. The bear stood over activists and representatives of Indigenous Peoples from north and south. As indigenous rights were being the December 10 version of the negotiated, legally binding operative text, the group demanded climate action and for the rights of the Indigenous Peoples be specifically included.

Vyzcheslav Shadrin from the Yukagir people in the Russian Far East said that it is unfair that the rights of Indigenous Peoples are not included in the text. “We are on the frontline of climate change, and are suffering its first and worst impacts. So we have a right to be recognized in this international forum,” he said.

Maria Leuza, from the Mundurucus people, who live along the Tapajos River in the Amazon basin in Brazil talked about the construction of the big dam Belo Monte that, according to her, is destroying her community because it requires the flood of part of their lands and affects fishing. About 199 square miles (516 km²), a space bigger than the city of Chicago, will be flooded for the dam.

Leuza denounced the death threats her community has faced. “We are the people of Tapajós and we are suffering because they are destroying our forests, our land and our fishing,” she said. She explained the dam will destroy her culture and she asked the people to spread the word so everybody knows about what is happening in Tapajós.

Also Kumi Naidoo, Executive Director of Greenpeace talked about indigenous inclusion and said that “with less than three days remaining, negotiations must not stall. Ministers have to bring ambition to the long term goal, so that we have full de-carbonization by 2050 and financial support for the most vulnerable.”

He emphasized that “as we fight to protect the climate, we must also fight for the rights of Indigenous Peoples, who are on the frontline of the growing climate crisis. When this

polar bear roars, she roars for billions of people, and she roars loudest for those on the frontlines of climate change.”

Advances away from the communities

Meanwhile, negotiators announced this week they are optimistic about the advance in the negotiations regarding forests. In a press release, Daniel Vicente Ortega Pacheco, delegate from Ecuador and Henri Djombo, from the Republic of Congo said that they perceive a general understanding on the importance of forests for the mitigation and adaptation of climate change. “This will be, in a way, reflected in the agreement.”

They announced that parties have identified their ‘must be’ issues and their possible commitments to get there.

Outside the rooms being used for the negotiations the International Indigenous Forum on Climate Change (IIPFCC) insisted that measures and policies in achieving the objectives of the climate change convention should be anchored to the respect, protection and fulfillment of human rights, including the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

“The respect and protection of our rights is a critical element in order to further the maximum potential of Indigenous Peoples, traditional knowledge, innovations and sustainable livelihoods,” they pointed.

The organization emphasized that the agreement shall be implemented on the basis of equity and science, and in accordance with the principle of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.”

According to the Institute for the Study of Human Rights at Columbia University, 5 percent of global population is indigenous; they are the owners of 25 percent of global land and are responsible for 80 percent of the world's remaining biodiversity. Population, land and biodiversity are some of the key issues of the negotiation. Nevertheless the communities directly involved with them are not seated in the negotiating table.

Deforestation, mainly conversion of forests for agriculture activities, has been estimated at an alarming rate of 13 million hectares per year. Forests, where most indigenous communities live, capture closer than 5 percent of all emissions made by humans, according to the Center for International Forestry Research.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/12/11/indigenous-denounce-exclusion-rights-cop21-162737>

Virginia Native American Tribes, 1964



Posted: Saturday, December 12, 2015 8:00 am

Nicole Kappatos, Newsroom Researcher and Archivist

In March 1964, two Chickahominy tribe members in Charles City County worked on a small farm. Leonard Adkins (left) was also a teacher, and Wilfred Holmes was a student.

An accompanying article reviewed population trends among Virginia's Native American reservations.

The story explored how Virginia's Native American population on reservations was shrinking thus putting at risk the land that their forefathers acquired 300 years earlier.

The report prefaced however, "The possibility, though still remote, looms because some day there may be no Indians who care to live on their two King William county river-front tracts—one now occupied by the Pamunkey tribe and the other by the Mattaponi."

According to the 1960 census, the number of Virginia Native Americans was 2,155. While the population was greater than it was in the 17th century, it had not increased significantly by 1964.



One reason for this, according to the report, was that young Native Americans were moving away from reservations seeking better employment.

Among the Pamunkeys, attrition was acute but, “less pressing with the Mattaponis.” Furthermore, the Mattaponis “have 17 children in school while the Pamunkeys have only five school-age children, none young. Tribal leaders admit they are worried.”

In response to the Times-Dispatch reporter’s question, “What will happen when the middle-aged and old people there now are gone?”

Chief Tecumseh Cook said, “I just wonder...I don’t know. I’m asked that question a lot lately and I don’t have the answer. I wish there was some way to give our youngsters more jobs down here, but I can’t blame them for leaving.”

Regardless of the noticeable population changes, the Virginia tribes were not yet at a crossroads, “they don’t even know for sure what would happen to their ancestral lands if there were no resident tribesmen,” the reporter explained.

Though the number of residents on the reservations totaled less than 100, both the Pamunkeys and Mattaponis claimed as many as 400 tribesmen each.

The Chickahominy, though they did not have a distinctive reservation territory, mainly resided in Charles City and New Kent Counties.



Two of Chickahominy Tribesmen in Charles City County Work on Small Farm
Leonard Adkins (left) Is Also a Teacher and Wilfred Holmes Is a Student

In 1964, they were the largest tribe in the state, numbering around 500 tribesmen. The reporter explained their location was to remain close to their ancestors’ hunting ground in the Chickahominy river valley, “and the majority live within five miles of their school a few miles to the south of Roxbury in Charles City County.”

In Roxbury, the Chickahomies chief at the time was O.O. Adkins—they also had a tribal council.

Why were the Chickahomies growing in number while other area tribes stayed stagnant?

One hypothesis offered in the article was that it was due to their proximity to more job opportunities. “The reservation Indians on the other hand, have had to rely more on fishing, trapping or what work they can get close by.”

Direct Link: http://www.richmond.com/from-the-archives/article_33581bec-9531-11e5-a49b-9b3130bee13c.html

Adam Sandler’s ‘Ridiculous Six’ – so, how racist is it?

by [Larry Carroll](#) at 11:12 PM on Dec 11, 2015



Earlier this year, the first film in Adam Sandler’s [production deal with Netflix](#) encountered a public relations nightmare when Native American actors [walked off the set](#) of the Western, citing racism in the script. The star himself denied any such intentions, citing humor as his defense — but now that the film is available for streaming on Netflix, the proof is in the Pocahontas jokes.

The film stars Sandler as “White Knife,” a white man raised by Native Americans. When he discovers that his long-absent father (Nick Nolte) has been dropping his seed all over the Old West, he recruits newfound brothers including Ramon (Rob Schneider) and Lil’ Pete (Taylor Lautner) in a “Magnificent Seven”-like mission to take down the badguys.

Perhaps it's unfair to focus on the racism claims; perhaps it is far more offensive that Sandler spends the whole film doing a raspy Man-With-No-Name voice, that Schneider's burro covers a man in diarrhea, or that Taylor Lautner keeps taking about his third nipple. Is the film racist, is it harmless — or is it just business-as-usual Happy Madison?

Below is every instance of racism in “The Ridiculous Six” — read on, and then you make the call.

1) The very first image in the entire movie is a sign that reads “Redskins Keep Out!” So, unless you're an embattled fan of a certain Washington football team, you might be offended before the first word of the script is even spoken.

2) Another sign reads “Maize munchers shot on sight”

3) When an attractive Native American girl is first glimpsed, a cowboy refers to her as a “sweet piece of red prairie meat.”

4) A Native American woman is referred to as “Poca-Hot-T****”

5) To antagonize Adam Sandler's character — a Native American sympathizer — one of the bad cowboys says: “I think you've been smoking too much of that peace pipe, Kemo-slobby.”

6) Steve Zahn's cross-eyed shopkeeper refers to Sandler's girlfriend as an “Injun Whore.”

7) A “perky” Native American woman is known as “Never Wears Bra.”

8) Reverse racism! A Native American named Raging Bear is introduced as being able to “do a great imitation of a white guy.” He then prances about and says: “Hey guys, let's play with our chest hair and eat potato chips!”

9) To mix things up, the racism goes South of the Border when Schneider's Mexican character Ramon walks into a bank and the **manager** says to another customer “It's not like you're some greasy Mexican.” Oops!

10) Another Native American woman is named “Beaver Breath”

11) John Turturro plays baseball inventor Abner Doubleday, who coins the term “Shortstop” while mocking a Chinese man in the field.

12) Vanilla Ice, as Mark Twain, participates in a Native American group dance. Yes, you read that sentence correctly.

Direct Link: <http://zap2it.com/2015/12/adam-sandler-ridiculous-six-racist/>

Mike Jones: 'Boomtown:' A look at Tulsa's past

An important look at Tulsa's past



The Greenwood District of Tulsa is left in rubble following the 1921 Tulsa Race Riot in an image from "Boomtown: An American Journey," a new Tulsa Historical Society documentary showing Courtesy/Tulsa Historical Society at Circle Cinema beginning Wednesday.

To purchase "Boomtown"

"Boomtown: An American Journey," a Tulsa Historical Society documentary telling the story of Tulsa's history, is available at the gift shop at Tulsa Historical Society, 2445 S. Peoria Ave., 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. Telephone: 918-712-9484.

The DVD is priced at \$20, or \$22 for a Blu-ray edition.

The film is also available through the Vimeo streaming service at vimeo.com/ondemand/boomtown. The 24-hour rental price is \$7.99. The downloaded purchase price is \$20.

"Boomtown" is can be viewed at the historical society for the price of admission: \$5 for adults, \$3 for seniors, free for children, students and museum members.

Posted: Sunday, December 13, 2015 12:00 am | *Updated: 1:12 am, Sun Dec 13, 2015.*

By MIKE JONES Associate Editor

The challenge: Take more than 100 years of history and boil it down to 40 minutes. OK, I'll give you 41 minutes.

That's a near impossible task, but it was accomplished in "Boomtown: An American Journey." Produced by the Tulsa Historical Society, it debuted at the Circle Cinema and at the Tulsa Historical Society in July, and more than 3,000 people saw it then.

Now, it's available on DVD. And it's worth the price — \$20 for the DVD or \$22 for a Blu-ray edition.

It's the history of Tulsa, and reflects not only Tulsa but the history of all of Oklahoma. Does it cover all the bases and answer all the questions? No. But, remember, there were only 41 minutes with which to work.

To completely cover the entire history of Tulsa would take a Cecil B. DeMille epic.

"Boomtown" (not to be confused with the 1940 movie "Boom Town," which starred Clark Gable, Spencer Tracy and Claudette Colbert, and was the story of oil wildcatters with a connection to Oklahoma) takes head-on the issues, good and bad, of Tulsa's history.

It touches on some of the major factors that molded the city: Native Americans, oil, architecture, the arts, Route 66 and the 1921 Race Riot.

Viewers are guided through the film by well-known Tulsans, including Clifton Taulbert, Hannibal Johnson, Michael Wallis, Phil Lakin and Sharon King-Davis.

The story, of course, begins with the forced relocation of Native American tribes from the Southeast to Indian Territory. The city's Native American heritage is given the importance and attention it deserves.

It was the Muscogee (Creek) tribe that played the major role in the founding of Tulsa. The tribe's historical Council Oak Tree still stands. It was the Native Americans who settled the area and became ranchers and farmers.

And (spoiler alert) Tulsa is the only city in the United States bordered by three Native American tribes — Creek, Cherokee and Osage.

But it was oil that was Tulsa's catalyst to greatness. As the documentary points out, it has been a wild ride.

Every Oklahoman is accustomed to the booms and busts of the energy business. We're experiencing a bust right now. But in 1900 when the first oil boom hit, it sparked a rush of newcomers looking for a way to strike it rich. Some did; many others didn't. Still, thousands came.

The second boom started around 1915 and lasted until at least 1930. That was the era that cemented Tulsa's reputation as The Oil Capital of the World that lasted into the 1970s. That boom continued the expansion of Tulsa.

With the vision of men lucky and savvy enough to become wealthy in the oil business, Tulsa began to develop into a modern city. As luck would have it, if that is the correct way to say it, the Great Depression gave Tulsa the opportunity to offer work to craftsmen who were out of work back east.

Coincidentally, the art deco form of architecture was popular at the time. The oil barons brought in those out-of-work craftsmen to build their lavish homes and put their touch on downtown buildings that have become world-famous.

The builders of Tulsa, understanding what makes a city successful, plowed money into the arts. (Spoiler alert) Before Tulsa had a sewer system, it had the Grand Opera House. That dedication to the arts spawned world-class ballet and opera companies.

From ballet, northeast Oklahoma produced the Five Moons, ballerinas of world renown with Native American roots. Vinita-born Yvonne Chouteau of the Shawnee Tribe; Rosella Hightower, a Choctaw from Durwood, Oklahoma; Moscelyne Larkin of Peoria, Shawnee and Russian heritage and born in Miami, Oklahoma; and sisters Maria and Marjorie Tallchief, both Osage, who grew up in Fairfax.

As much as the accomplishments of Tulsa's history are lauded, its darker past is not ignored. Although segregation was an accepted practice in Tulsa, and most of the nation, the Greenwood District, north of Archer Street, thrived.

But in 1921, disaster struck. Based on what happened or what was said between a black man and a white woman, white men invaded Greenwood. When they finished, much of the district was burned to the ground.

It was a part of Tulsa and Oklahoma history that was forgotten or ignored for decades. It is addressed in this DVD through historical accounts and riveting vintage photos.

Nevertheless, Greenwood survived and rebuilt. In the 1930s and 1940s, it was home to popular jazz clubs. There's even a line in the Bob Wills song "Take Me Back to Tulsa" that acknowledges the district: "Let me off at Archer, I'll walk down to Greenwood." That's not in the DVD.

Tulsa's history is too rich for a 41-minute DVD or a 25-inch column. Each part of that history could and has filled books. But the DVD's producers have done an excellent job of compressing a lot into a small amount of time.

This is a DVD that needs to be seen by all Tulsans, even those who have lived here all their lives. It ought to be shown in all schools.

We learn the good and the bad from our history. And both will make us better people now and in the future.

Direct Link: http://www.tulsaworld.com/opinion/mikejones/mike-jones-boomtown-a-look-at-tulsa-s-past/article_edc2fcc4-1f00-547f-aac4-c25664b35730.html

A worthy cause for generous Facebook founder: American Indian schools

Mark Zuckerberg and his wife, Priscilla Chan, could help lift federally neglected students out of poverty.

By Editorial Board Star Tribune

December 11, 2015 — 6:34pm

Text size

As announcements of philanthropic gifts go, it's hard to top the one made this month by Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg and his wife, Priscilla Chan.

In an emotional letter addressed to their soon-to-be-born daughter, the couple announced that they would dedicate a staggering sum — Facebook shares currently worth \$45 billion — to philanthropy over their lifetimes. The scope of their ambition is also breathtaking. They want nothing less than to cure diseases, advance human potential, combat inequality and “channel the talents, ideas and contributions of every person in the world.”

They no doubt will be besieged by requests, and the Star Tribune Editorial Board offers another. We'd like to spotlight a neglected educational crisis in desperate need of the couple's beneficence: poor outcomes for all American Indian students and the deplorable conditions of many tribal school buildings.

Native students nationally have the lowest graduation rate of any ethnic group. And as the Star Tribune's “Separate and Unequal” editorial series documented in 2014, many tribal school buildings are in shocking disrepair because of federal neglect. Providing a safe environment that promotes learning would be a smart, targeted use for the couple's philanthropic dollars — one that would provide a solid foundation for improving outcomes. The couple's technological expertise also could bring broadband to more of these schools, helping children on remote reservations connect with the world.

Only in his early 30s, Zuckerberg is already a philanthropic force in education, donating \$100 million to Newark, N.J., schools and \$120 million to California's Bay Area schools. Branching out to include schools that serve American Indian students in disadvantaged, often crime-ridden communities is a logical step. It's hard to imagine where the Zuckerberg fortune could more immediately begin the work of lifting future generations out of poverty.

Direct Link: <http://www.startribune.com/a-worthy-cause-for-generous-facebook-founder-american-indian-schools/361629241/>

Final Curtain: A. Paul Ortega's Last Concert for Indian Country

[Jason Morgan Edwards](#)

12/13/15

On a night filled with songs, smiles and stories, A. Paul Ortega, a famed musician and Mescalero Apache Medicine Man who has played with such greats as Floyd Crow Westerman and Sharon Burch, gave one last performance to an enthusiastic crowd at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center in Albuquerque, NM. Accompanied by family band members, Joe Tohonníe, Jr. and the Apache Crown Dancers, Ortega performed for over an hour.

Though Ortega's December 4, 2015 performance was billed as a public performance, it wasn't a standard concert, per se. Ortega shared his talents to the crowd in the quintessential Native style through storytelling, humor and music.

Though Ortega delivered an enjoyable performance on the 4th, Ortega told ICTMN, it had been about five years since he had last performed due to a series of serious recent illnesses.

"I had a stroke a year and a half ago and I had a heart attack about five years ago.

"I really looked forward to it," Ortega told ICTMN of his last public performance. "I got all enthused and excited, and I really rehearsed. I got the whole group back together and my whole family was with me. I'm glad, it's been a long time."

As an artist that has been recording since the early 1960s. Ortega's label, [Canyon Records](#), credits him with the following:

In the early 1960's Mescalero Apache musician, A Paul Ortega created a sound that influenced the early roots of contemporary Native American music as we know it today. This respected medicine man [His music]effortlessly fuses his healing traditions with very gentle guitar strumming, the stomp of a bass drum and the mournful cry of a harmonica. His blues-tinged vocals and short narratives draw upon many aspects of Native culture and are in fact a very good introduction to the many traditions of Native people.

After the stroke, Ortega says, "They thought that this show wouldn't come to be. But, I'm really trying to get back, y'know? During the week, I used to grab a guitar. But, the stroke was the thing that took everything away from me. I had to re-learn how to walk.

Right now, I'm walking around with a four-wheeler that's holding me up. It's hard, but you can't quit, y'know?"

Though Ortega's music is influenced by Apache teachings and traditions, he didn't start out playing the Native-style music for which he has become known. "We were in Chicago during the late '50s and I was playing bass for a western band. There was this one guy, he gets up and puts Indian clothes on and he's jumping around, making fun of Indian music. He throws a cup of water in the air and gets underneath and he says I am now called Rain in the Face. He's trying to be funny, y'know? It used to bother me. So, one day I got in early to see him. He was a little smaller than me. So, I figured if he wanted to fight, I could take him on. It didn't happen, but we argued how bad it is for him to use Indians as a way of making fun.

"I said, 'You're talking about tradition. You're talking about religion. You're talking about beliefs. And, this is what we live. This is what we're about. It's not something we just talk about.' So, the guy says 'Show me.' So, for the next five years I worked to get some background for the music I was talking about. That's how my music came to be," he said.

"I sing Indian songs. I'm a Medicine Man. That's where I get my music. I try to explain to people what it means. It's not just something they sing. It's not just something that sounds good. It's something that tells you about history or about what to be... We have to live what we say, what we do, and what we think, and what we're about, y'know?"

"It's a self-being. The whole thing revolves around respect for everything that's around you. Without water, vegetation cannot live. Without water and vegetation, animals cannot live.

Without water, vegetation and animals, human beings cannot live. So, we are all part of them. But, we've got to learn how to respect these things, y'know? There's a lot more to it, but those are the basic fundamentals, if you learn the traditional ways."

In a career that has spanned more than 50 years, Ortega says he begins and ends each day with a special prayer and song in his language. "There is a little prayer that says you live well. Live well...I live well...we all live well...I hope that you are well."

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/12/13/final-curtain-paul-ortegas-last-concert-indian-country-162756>

Fargo's Zahn McClarnon on Hanzee's Backstory and the Types of Roles Native Americans Get Onscreen

By [Lucas Kavner](#) Follow [@lucaskavner](#)



Every time Zahn McClarnon appeared on this season of *Fargo*, you've known something thrilling or terrifying was about to unfold. As Hanzee, one of the Gerhardt family's most respected henchmen, his allegiances were always tenuous, and his steely resolve and complex inner life proved integral to one of 2015's best shows. McClarnon himself has worked on countless films and television shows since the early '90s — this year alone he appeared in *Bone Tomahawk* and continued his recurring role as Officer Mathias on *Longmire* — but Hanzee is undoubtedly a standout. In these past few episodes, the character's own heritage and place in this otherwise white-washed Midwestern world has become a powerful centerpiece of the show. McClarnon spoke to Vulture over the phone from Los Angeles about developing the character, his own backstory, and the types of roles Native Americans get onscreen.

These last few episodes have sort of become the Hanzee Show. Especially in episode nine, your journey is certainly one of the main thrusts.

Yeah, different characters get to pop out in different episodes. That's what's so great, it's really an ensemble. There was Milligan as the centerpiece for a few episodes, then it was Hanzee. It can be anybody's show at any time.

Did you know the direction your character would take before you started, or were you experiencing it as it happened?

I had no idea. We were handed scripts like eight or ten days before we started shooting, so it was always a big surprise whenever we would start. I was amazed where Noah [Hawley] took the story.

You've been working a long time, though this is probably one of your highest-profile characters to date. Can you talk a bit about how you started out as an actor?

I guess I started about 23 years ago. I moved out to L.A. from Omaha, Nebraska. It was a time when *Dances With Wolves* came out, and I kind of jumped on the bandwagon and have been working ever since. Since the early '90s, actually. I've been consistently working for over 20 years.

What sparked the initial interest in acting?

Probably a play I did in Nebraska in my early 20s. I did *Jesus Christ Superstar* and fell in love with being onstage, and did some local commercials in Omaha. That experience — being on a set, making a bit of money acting — I fell in love with it. I moved out to Los Angeles in '91 or '92 and started working immediately.

You grew up on a reservation, correct? Or you spent part of your childhood on a reservation?

I grew up in Glacier National Park in Yellowstone. My grandparents lived on the Blackfeet Reservation, which is about 20 miles from where I lived in Montana. So on and off I was on the reservation with my family, on weekends or for chunks of time. My mom grew up on a reservation in South Dakota, and then moved up to Blackfeet in the '50s.

Hanzee's Native American heritage has become a large part of who he is and what he stands for, whereas earlier in the season, his background was more of a mystery.

Did you create your own story for this shift in his character?

I did. Like you said, there wasn't a lot written on the page about him, other than he was adopted at nine years old by the Gerhardt family, which was actually going on a lot in the '60s and '70s — a lot of kids being adopted out of their families into other families and relocated into other environments. So I know he went through that. And then being in the war, you know, that would have a big impression on anybody. He was this tunnel rat in Vietnam, sending the Indian down into the tunnels. I also drew from my own experience growing up in the '70s as a Native American, being on the reservation and also living on the border of a reservation, and experiences I had with racism, on both sides. Being a mixed Native American, because my father was an Irishman, I saw both sides of it.

So that racism is vivid in your own memory?

It's very vivid. Not being served in restaurants in the early '70s. I remember it vividly. They didn't come up and say, "We're not going to serve you," they just left us sitting at the table and then didn't ask for our order for 45 minutes. And it's still going on. You'd be surprised how racist these border towns are. Not just white people being racist against Natives, but Natives being racist against white people as well.

Native American actors have gotten some attention this year — there was [the controversy with *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt* on Netflix](#) and the [walkoffs on the Adam Sandler movie, *The Ridiculous Six*](#). Are these things that people have been talking about a lot in your own community?

Yeah, they are. I had friends who worked on that Adam Sandler film. I wasn't there, so I don't know exactly what took place and who exactly walked off the set. I think it was mainly background actors who did. I have had conversations with a few of the actors who were principals on the show. I have an open mind about seeing [the movie] because of the content of the film, you know, it's *ridiculous*. It's called *Ridiculous Six* so they probably make fun of everybody. I do know that for me, personally, I wouldn't have been part of that film. That's just me, personally.

You often play very specifically Native-American characters. Does that ever frustrate you?

I have played characters where race isn't a centerpiece of the project, certainly. A waiter, a bookie, those kinds of things. There are casting directors who see past it, though we definitely have a long way to go. I did a movie recently where I'm playing a drug runner, and he's not — there's really no race as a part of the character, he doesn't discuss his ethnicity at all. So things are happening, we'd like to see more obviously, but they are happening, and it's taken a positive turn. There does need to be more, though! *[Laughs.]* There should be more Natives on TV.

In your dream role you'd create for yourself, what would you play?

The reality is, I look ethnic. So, I've played Latino roles, and I've played Native roles. I'm dark-skinned. I'd love a role where I'm playing a father, a loving husband, a relationship-based movie. A child and father, father-son kind of thing. I do a lot of that stuff in my classes I take, and I have a lot of fun doing it. Just being a human being and relating to another human being.

You still enjoy taking classes?

Yeah, I've been studying for quite a few years in Los Angeles. I always go to class when I'm not working. And it's kind of where I get off, you know? Because the majority of the time I'm not going to be cast in these roles. And acting is acting. In a classroom, in front of a group of people, or in front of a camera. I still get off on that whole process.

The *Fargo* finale is coming up tomorrow night. Have you seen the final episode yet?

I haven't seen the final episode, though I do know where it's going, and I think the audience is going to be ... pleasantly surprised. It kind of ties everything up and ties the two seasons together. I've been so fortunate to be part of a show where such a talented group of people have been put together.

Direct Link: <http://www.vulture.com/2015/12/fargo-zahn-mcclarnon-hanzee-native-americans.html#>

Navajo Nation's nutrition crisis

In Part 1 of our America Left Behind series, Al Jazeera looks at a community where 1 in 3 are diabetic or at risk

Steven Thompson, 54, at his home in Lupton, Ariz.

By [Tristan Ahtone](#) in Red Mesa, Ariz., Jolene Yazzie in Lupton

Photos by [Jolene Yazzie](#) for Al Jazeera America

Published on Monday, December 14, 2015

Series

At the end of this year, the targets set by the United Nations in 2000 for developing countries will expire. In this project, we take those eight Millennium Development Goals and examine how some communities in the United States measure up. We have applied each goal to the U.S. by looking at an indicator used to measure a country's development success and interpreting it for a specific community in America. The eight goals are: eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality and empower women, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, combat HIV/AIDS and other diseases, ensure environmental sustainability, and develop a global partnership for development. An indicator for the first goal — eradicating extreme poverty and hunger — is the proportion of the population below the minimum level of dietary energy consumption. In this piece, we look at the health consequences of a lack of access to fresh food in Navajo Nation.

Steven Thompson grew up poor on Navajo Nation. After nearly three decades on a diet built around potatoes, lunch meat and canned goods, he was diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes; his right leg was amputated as a result of complications from the disease eight years ago.

Now, at the age of 54, Thompson tries to stay active and eat the food his doctor recommends to prevent further complications from the disease, but it's not easy: the closest grocery store is 32 miles away and he has chronic pain.

“It’s really hurting, but you don’t to heal no more, you know, and then your whole leg aches like your leg’s still there ... They gave me this [medicine] to try to help it, but it don’t really help me,” he said.

The nearly [300,000 residents](#) of the Navajo Nation — an area roughly the size of South Carolina — are served by only 10 grocery stores. Gas stations and trading posts fill the vast spaces in between those stores, selling foods loaded with salt, sugar, fat and preservatives. According to the Diné Community Advocacy Alliance, a Navajo think tank, [80 percent](#) of food sold in the Navajo Nation could be considered junk. [One in three](#) residents is diabetic or prediabetic, and recent studies show that heart disease is the [second-leading cause of death](#) among tribal citizens living on the reservation.



A highway in Navajo nation, top. The 7211 Food Store in Shiprock, New Mexico, left. The trading post in Keams Canyon sells groceries alongside souvenirs for tourists. (*Click to enlarge images*)

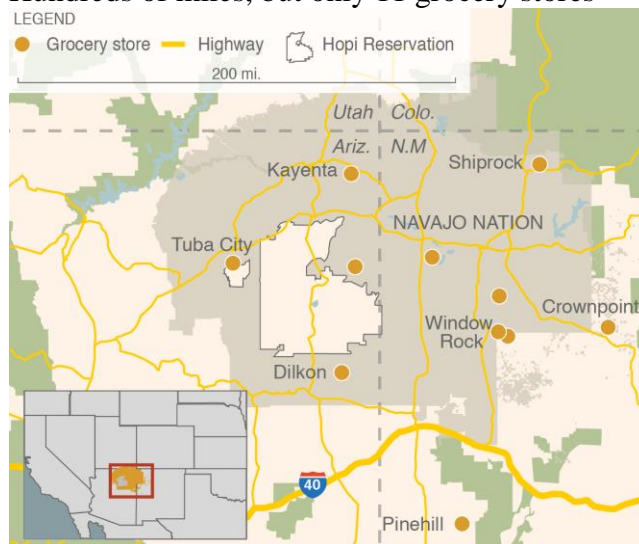
But the question of food access could soon be getting renewed focus. Starting in January, the United States will be aiming to reach the United Nations' new Sustainable

Development Goals. One of the priorities is ensuring access to nutritious food. In Indian Country, achieving that goal is a long way off.

In a [report to Congress](#), “Addressing Child Hunger and Obesity in Indian Country,” researchers found that Native American children had “approximately twice the levels of food insecurity, obesity and Type 2 diabetes relative to the averages for all U.S. children of similar ages.”

“We need to stop [trying to fix] the rest of the world and start pursuing solutions inside the United States,” said Denisa Livingston, a community health advocate with the Diné Community Advocacy Alliance. “If things do not change, then the Navajo Nation will no longer exist.”

Hundreds of miles, but only 11 grocery stores



Source: [Diné Policy Institute](#). Map by Alex Newman/Al Jazeera America.

The report went on to say that children living on tribal lands were disadvantaged historically, with 24 percent of Native households living below the federal poverty line and Native families receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits at nearly double the national rate. In Indian Country, the USDA estimated, 878,000 children in 2008 received free or reduced-price school lunches.

“Over time we have actually created a culture to depend on unhealthy food,” which are less expensive and readily available, said Livingston. “We have created an environment — not only physically but socially — that it is O.K. to eat unhealthy food.”

Alfreda Baldwin Begay, 54, who was diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes two years ago, has to travel 30 miles to her nearest grocery store. She has seven children and said their diet preferences — which include fried bread and homemade french fries — make it hard for her to eat what her doctors tell her to. When she was diagnosed with diabetes, she weighed 315 pounds.

She said that she would advise other Navajo to “eat your vegetables” and exercise — neither of which were part of her routine — to avoid diabetes.



Inside the refrigerator of Woodrow Wilson Whitman, a 66-year-old diabetic, top left. Alfreda Baldwin Begay at home in Lupton, Ariz., right. Steven Thompson in his kitchen. *(Click to enlarge images)*

Thompson also struggled to change his diet after his diagnosis, because of the expense and ingrained habits.

“I’m supposed to drink rice milk, but I can’t afford it. It’s expensive stuff ... You can’t eat what you — all your life you ate what you wanted, [like] candy bars. You still sneak a couple bites of it, and then you save it for the next time around in a couple weeks, then eat the whole thing.”

Aretta Begay is taking matters into her own hands. She raises five Navajo-Churro sheep for their meat and wool and keeps a small vegetable garden. For her, self-sufficiency is the only realistic option.

“We have a huge problem with having access to good, quality food,” she said. “We don’t have access to grocery stores.”

“The nearest grocery store, you probably have to drive at least an hour from here,” said Begay. “So when you go there, you have to think in terms of preparing yourself and getting supplies for an entire month.”



Aretta Begay finds a seedling on her land, in Arizona near the border with Utah, left, and near a livestock pen on the property. *(Click to enlarge images)*

Historically, federal policy has made indigenous, self-sustaining agriculture difficult. Between forced removals of tribal nations from their historic homelands to concentration-

camp-style reservations and the introduction of processed foods to replace traditional diets, farming and ranching have been almost eradicated from tribal practices.

“I’ve had family members who have passed on because of unchecked diabetes,” said Moroni Benally of the Diné Policy Institute. “I know people who are constantly diagnosed with [diabetes], and it gets scary.”

When the Navajo returned to their homes after being forcibly removed by U.S. forces in the late 1800s, they began rebuilding where federal authorities had slashed and burned their farms. By the late 1930s and early ’40s, it was estimated, Navajo farmers owned over 1 million sheep and goats. However, the Bureau of Indian Affairs destroyed nearly half those animals over fears that overgrazing would create a new dust bowl.

Those livestock reductions crippled the Navajo economy and forced many tribal members to rely on nontraditional foods. Today almost the entire Navajo Nation is [classified as a food desert](#) by the United States Department of Agriculture, meaning it is a low-income census tract where a substantial number of residents have low access to large grocery stores.



A grocery store in Red Lake, Ariz. ([Click to enlarge images](#))

“We want to move away from being dependent on external food systems, and having food trucked in just doesn’t get to that end goal,” said Benally. “You look at indigenous communities across the world, and they’re dealing with that as well.”

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, indigenous people constitute 5 percent of the world’s population but account for nearly 15 percent of the world’s poor. The “main causes of marginalization of indigenous peoples derive from the violation of their right to their traditional land and territories,” according to the organization.

“I think if you talk to indigenous people, just giving someone food doesn’t solve the problem,” said Benally. “There’s an implicit understanding that if there’s a reconnection to the cultural base — this cultural ethos of Navajo — it becomes easier for them to deal with the harsh realities of living in a colonized context. So, to be very simple, I think a grocery store is just a symbol of more Western incursion and encroachment into Navajo.”



Vending machines in Kykotsmovi, which is on the Hopi Reservation inside the Navajo Nation. (*Click to enlarge images*)

One way the U.N. hopes to end hunger: encourage sustainable food production among indigenous peoples by 2030. On the Navajo Nation, some tribal citizens are already on that track.

“When we raise our own sheep, we’re able to sustain ourselves,” said Aretta Begay. “We’re able to feed our own family, whether it’s big or small.”

But progress in Navajo Nation, with its high poverty rates and long-standing lack of access to nutritious food, will be an uphill battle.

Alfreda Begay said that when her doctors told her she had diabetes, at first she didn’t understand the gravity of the diagnosis because it is so common. “I didn’t know that that meant. I just figured, you know, everybody has it.”

Direct Link: <http://projects.aljazeera.com/2015/12/navajo-malnutrition/>

Senate passes bill to rename Nisqually Refuge after Native American activist Billy Frank Jr.

Posted 11:32 AM, December 15, 2015, by [Associated Press](#), Updated at 12:09pm, December 15, 2015



WASHINGTON, D.C. – The U.S. Senate has passed a bill to rename the Nisqually Wildlife Refuge at the south end of Puget Sound near Olympia, to bear the name of Billy Frank Jr., a northwest activist who fought for Native American fishing rights.

The bill also proposes building a memorial in the refuge commemorating the Medicine Creek Treaty of 1854.

The idea came from U.S. Rep. Denny Heck, a Washington Democrat and longtime friend of Frank. It was cosponsored by the entire Washington state delegation.

With President Barack Obama's signature, the bill would be officially rename the refuge the "Billy Frank Jr., Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge."

The National Park Service would maintain the Medicine Creek Treaty National Memorial.

Frank used that 1854 treaty in his fight for Native American fishing rights. He was arrested more than 50 times for "illegal" fishing in the Nisqually River before a change in the law.

He died in spring 2014 and was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Direct Link: <http://q13fox.com/2015/12/15/senate-passes-bill-to-rename-nisqually-refuge-after-native-american-activist-billy-frank-jr/>

Santa Fe looks to pass legislation to protect authentic Native American art

By Daniel TrujilloPublished: December 15, 2015, 9:46 pm



SANTA FE (KRQE) – The City of Santa Fe and the arts community came together Tuesday to support efforts to protect authentic Indian art.

Native Americans and their artwork have fallen victim to forgery and counterfeiting in the past. In October, federal agents raided shops in Santa Fe after an investigation revealed they were passing off Filipino-made jewelry as Native American jewelry.

On Tuesday, the mayor proposed legislation that will help combat the issue.

“We are going to require all individuals who sell Native American art to disclose the name of the artist, the origin of where the art comes from, and the materials that are being used,” said Santa Fe Mayor Javier Gonzales.

The legislation would also create a cultural district around downtown Santa Fe that would follow historic guidelines. The legislation, if passed, would be one of a kind.

Direct Link: <http://krqe.com/2015/12/15/santa-fe-looks-to-pass-legislation-to-protect-authentic-native-american-art/>

Memorial to recognize Native Americans

Bob Gross, Times Herald 7:33 p.m. EST December 15, 2015



John Kennedy wants to recognize the people who were living at the head of the St. Clair River long before the French explorer Daniel Greysolon, Sieur du Lhut, built Fort St. Joseph in 1686.

"I'm bringing awareness there were people here before the Europeans," Kennedy said.

A member of the Oneida Nation, one of the five nations of the Iroquois Confederacy, Kennedy is the driving force behind a memorial to the early peoples of the Port Huron area. It will be installed north of the Blue Water Bridge along the riverfront.

Kennedy grew up in upstate New York. He came to the Blue Water Area in 1965.

"There is no recognition of the Native Americans in Port Huron, except for one marker on the old Michigan National Bank," Kennedy said.

"What they mark is the reservation," he said. "I hate reservations. Those were places the Europeans decided, if we were good, we could stay there."

Kennedy on Tuesday conducted a short ceremony, burning sage and tobacco at the site where the memorial will go and where the city recently installed a temporary marker.



John Kennedy ignites a sage bundle during a ceremony at the site of a planned Native American memorial in Port Huron. (Photo: Bob Gross/Times Herald)

The permanent marker will be a large boulder, Kennedy said, with three images. Greg Lashbrook, a local artist and diver, is helping with the artwork.

The images, according to Kennedy, will be of a faceless and handless man to represent the past; of a middle-aged woman to represent the present; and of an infant to represent the future.

He said he is getting input from First Nation peoples and tribes in both Ontario and Michigan regarding the planned memorial.

"I've met with the chiefs in Ontario, and I've presented my spiel to them," Kennedy said.

"What I'm doing, I want people to show up and do ceremonies to honor the people who were here,"

He said he plans another ceremony at 10 a.m. Sunday at the memorial site.

He also will meet with Native American leaders at the end of January in Sault Ste. Marie.



John Kennedy offers tobacco during a ceremony at the site of a planned Native American memorial in Port Huron. (Photo: Bob Gross/Times Herald)

"They can get the word out quicker than me to the native peoples," he said.

Kennedy said he figures it will cost about \$15,000 to erect the memorial. He hopes to have the memorial in place by the middle of July or August.

"I'm 70 now, and hopefully I'll live long enough to get the rock up," he said.

More Information

Contact John Kennedy at (810) 388-5143,

Kennedy has a GoFundMe page for the Native American memorial at <https://www.gofundme.com/vy8cuce4>

Direct Link: <http://www.thetimesherald.com/story/news/local/port-huron/2015/12/15/memorial-recognize-native-americans/77357946/>

Oklahoma man threatens to bomb, kill Native Americans and African Americans

POSTED 10:04 PM, DECEMBER 15, 2015, BY LESLIE RANGEL
BLAINE COUNTY, Okla. - A bomb threat was called into an Oklahoma casino.

The caller threatened to shoot dozens of people, focusing on minority groups.

The Blaine County sheriff's office said he has a criminal past.

He's frequently in on charges of intoxication but never a bomb threat.

"It is scary to think about, especially with all threats been happening," said Colleen Barrett, a resident of Watonga.

That's the sentiment around the small city in Blaine County, just over 3,000 in population.

"To have anybody even threaten to attack any place in Oklahoma is frightening," said Keri Alva, an Oklahoma woman.

The threat was called in over the weekend to the Feather Warrior Casino in Watonga.

"I guess, he was wanting to talk with somebody, and I guess he bothers them all the time down there," said Undersheriff Gary Clyden of Blaine County Sheriff's Department.

On the other end of the line was Rickey Cudney.

The casino employees wouldn't transfer the call to the person he wanted.

"He gets upset and yells, 'I can get one stick of dynamite and take care of this problem,'" Clyden said. "He yelled that over the telephone."

According to court documents, he also said "he was going to come out to the casino and kill all the Indians."

"Not wanting to take a chance in today's world, the deputy went on out to where Mr. Cudney lives, which is out outside of the city," Clyden said.

Cudney was arrested on a complaint of domestic terrorism.

Documents said, while Cudney was at the Blaine County Jail, "he continued to make threats about killing Native Americans and the African American community."

"Whether it was just something that an intoxicated person says," Clyden said, "Or, whether he's got a bias, if he does, he's never showed it before, like I said, he's been with us before."

But, the undersheriff said these threats are not taken lightly.

"Very, very seriously. I don't want to be the one that says, 'Oh, it's nothing, Mr. Cudney is just intoxicated,' which he has a history of, 'I don't believe it' and then something actually happen, then I'd really be in trouble," Clyden said.

"It's not something to be playing with," said Mario Alva, another Oklahoma resident. "It's a serious matter."

Cudney spent around eight hours in the hospital sobering up before heading to the jail.

He is currently charged on one felony count of making a bomb threat.

Bond is set at \$100,000.

Direct Link: <http://kfor.com/2015/12/15/oklahoma-man-threatens-to-bomb-kill-native-americans-and-african-americans/>

Native American Women Are Rape Targets Because of a Legislative Loophole

By [Jessica Rizzo](#)

December 16, 2015

On December 7, 2015, the Supreme Court began hearing oral arguments for the *Dollar General Corporation v. Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians*, a case occasioned by the sexual assault of a 13-year-old Dollar General employee by his employer. While the Supreme Court doesn't often hear sexual assault cases, this one has a twist: The victim is **Native American**, and the assailant is white. The Dollar General store sits on the Choctaw reservation, land considered Indian Country (the legal term used by the federal government) and the legal question is whether tribal courts here have the civil jurisdiction to try non-Native individuals who commit crimes there. Many Native people and their allies fear the Supreme Court's verdict could render tribal sovereignty even more precarious than it already is.

No one knows this better than Native women who are survivors of **sexual assault**. **Eighty percent** of the reported sexual violence against Native women is committed by white men, who do so with virtual criminal impunity because, with very few exceptions, they cannot be tried in tribal courts. Federal authorities have the authority to step in for serious crimes, like rape or murder, but **often decline to prosecute crimes** that have been committed in Indian Country. This jurisdictional black hole has created a climate that many describe as "open season" on Native women on reservations.

Amy Casselman, a former case worker for the Washoe Tribe of California and Nevada, has authored a forthcoming book on the subject: *Injustice in Indian Country: Jurisdiction, American Law, and Sexual Violence Against Native Women*. I spoke to her to find out why Native women have been left so vulnerable, and what can be done about it.

VICE: What motivated you to write this book?

Amy Casselman: In 2009, I had the honor of meeting a woman named Lavetta Elk who in 2003 was assaulted near her home on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation by her Army recruiter Staff Sergeant Joseph Kopf. By strategically choosing to assault her on Indian land, he leveraged his identity as a non-Native person to get away with his crime. This is the reality for many Native women because the jurisdictional law that covers Indian country privileges non-Native people who commit crimes specifically against Native people. In Lavetta's case, because she was Native and Kopf was non-Native, the tribe couldn't prosecute him. The federal government then declined to prosecute. The US military investigated and found that Kopf had in fact sexually assaulted her, but they never prosecuted him. They never even discharged him from the military. As the result of the jurisdictional mess in Indian country, Lavetta was told that there was no justice to be found for her.

Despite this, she did not give up. Instead she aimed higher, and sued the US government for reparations based on treaty rights and won, culminating in one of the most significant legal victories for Native people in recent history. But remember, despite this, her assailant did not pay for his crime—the United States of America did, and Kopf is still a free man.

"Indian country is the only place where race becomes a de jure factor in criminal prosecution." — Amy Casselman

That's horrible. How did we get into this mess?

The biggest turning point was in 1978, when a US Supreme Court case called *Oliphant v. Suquamish* was decided, effectively racializing jurisdiction in America. The Court ruled that no tribal government has criminal jurisdiction over non-Native people. This case stemmed from an incident where Mark David Oliphant, who had been living and working on a reservation, assaulted a tribal police officer. He didn't think that he should be held accountable because he was white, and the Supreme Court agreed with him. Since then, Native people have not been able to prosecute non-Native people.

Tribal police officers will tell you that if they see some white person steal something from a store right in front of them, the only avenue they have to seek justice is to forward a report to the US Attorney. The FBI's not going to come help track down the guy who stole a carton of cigarettes or whatever. *Oliphant v. Suquamish* created a massive jurisdictional void. Now, Indian country is the only place where race becomes a de jure factor in criminal prosecution. Of course, criminal justice in the United States is very racialized, but there's no law that directly states, "If you're black you're going to get a harsher sentence." It's not actually written in the law. But because of *Oliphant*, there's

literally a law that says, "If you're white, you cannot be prosecuted by tribal governments, the most local and effective criminal justice systems in Indian country."

How did this decision affect women in particular?

Reservations became hunting grounds. In researching my book, I would go into the dark corners of the internet and find chat rooms where rapists and pedophiles would talk to each other about how to commit crimes. One forum was called "How to rape a woman and get away with it." Something that repeatedly came up was the suggestion that if you're not a Native person you should specifically target a Native people on reservations because you can do whatever you want there. A tribal police officer could even be present and they couldn't touch you. They couldn't do anything. This creates a lot of different types of crime—drug production, drug trafficking, human trafficking—but the people who disproportionately feel this sense of predation are Native women. Sexual assault in the US is an overwhelmingly intraracial crime, meaning that rape happens overwhelmingly between two members of the same race. Native women are the one statistical anomaly.

In the book, you talk about how the racist assumption that Native people are incapable of governing themselves perpetuates the problem.

Yes. Chuck Grassley, a Republican Senator from Iowa, has been one of the most vociferous critics of extending any jurisdictional authority to Native people. He spoke at **a town meeting in 2013** where he said that on an Indian reservation, the jury is going to be made up of Indians, so the non-Indian doesn't get a fair trial. It's the exact same argument that people were making in the 1800s, that Native people are incapable of justice, and unfair, and that non-Native people should never have to be submitted to these so-called savage, backward tribal justice systems.

In response, Indian Affairs attorney Ryan Dreveskracht stated, "Unfortunately, certain Republicans are singing the old song of unsophisticated tribal courts and uneducated tribal judges... I say, if you don't trust the ability of tribal courts to be fair and just, don't go to the reservation and rape women—but that's just my take." I think that pretty much sums it up.

Has the legal system always been like this for Native Americans?

Prior to European contact, Native communities had efficient, fully-functioning criminal justice systems, and those systems were centered around the experiences of Native women. The first written record of a law in the Creek Nation in 1824 essentially said that justice is whatever the woman wants. How does she see justice? What does she want to see happen? Sometimes that would be banishment from the tribe. I came across one case where a woman who was assaulted decided that they were going to hold the man down in the middle of their community and every woman was going to come and sit on his face because it would bring so much shame to him that he would never be able to hold his head high. So imagine if we flipped justice in that direction. Not every woman who's

assaulted wants to see their perpetrator incarcerated. Not everyone wants to go on a stand and re-live their experience publicly.

Right, because taking the stand can be harrowing. Isn't that precisely what prevents so many non-Native women from coming forward to report assault in the first place?

When it comes to addressing violence against women in general, the criminal justice system we have today is totally broken. It only functions at the point of crisis, after the assault has happened. That's not really justice in my eyes. Justice would be preventing it. Rape culture normalizes sexual violence, but it also focuses on the experiences of the perpetrators rather than the experiences of the victim. Often times when you see high school boys accused of rape it's all about, "Oh, they were such promising students and they had a scholarship for football, and now their lives are ruined." What about the survivor? Don't you think her life might be affected by this? The system doesn't work for white women, so why would it work for Native women?

With cases of sexual assault, it's often the woman who is put on trial. She has to prove that this actually happened. It's the *only* crime where the victim has to prove that a crime happened. That doesn't happen if your wallet gets stolen. I think that at the end of the day we need to believe women. We need to trust women. We need to look for solutions that center women, that center the people who have themselves experienced violence. It's not anyone's place to be prescriptive about what justice looks like for other people.

The book quotes Native journalist Mary Annette Pember, who responds to the statistic that one in three Native Women will be raped within their lifetime: "I and all the Indian women I know want to know, however, who those other two women are who haven't been assaulted—because we've never met them. The truth is that it's been open season on Indian women for a very, very long time." Have you found that this is something that's mostly just accepted as a fact of life?

Nobody in human history has ever passively accepted their own oppression. People have always found ways to resist. In my experience, Native resistance has taken two forms. One is to work within the system and one is to work outside of the system. In my book I refer to Chela Sandoval's theory of differential consciousness and also Kevin Bruyneel's notion of a "third space of sovereignty." Often we're presented with binary options, but in reality if you want to make changes in the world, why wouldn't you try as many avenues as you can? Native women can and do strategically navigate colonial structures as a way to ultimately subvert those structures. You don't have to wait for the federal government to fix the problem. There's this idea that the federal government either gives things to Native people or it takes them away—they give sovereignty or they take it back—but the Mohawk scholar Taiaiake Alfred argues that sovereignty is inherent. Nobody can give it or take it away. It would be as if I said to you, "OK, you can never be happy again. You can never smile." It's inherent, right? I can't take that away from you. And it's from this place that many Native women frame their activism—from a place of inherent strength and sovereignty over their own lands and their own bodies.

What do you hope readers take away from the book?

This book isn't about making anyone feel guilty or bad, but rather about the introspection that in my opinion all Americans have to engage in. George Lipsitz, a giant in the field of Ethnic Studies, once told me that being born in America is like entering the scene of a crime. It's bloody. It's messy. It's traumatic. And you had nothing to do with the crime, but now that you're in it, you have to decide what you're going to do about it. Are you going to try to understand what happened? Are you going to try to ignore it and pretend that nothing happened? Or are you going to fight for justice? And I think that each of us as Americans at one point consciously or subconsciously has to make that decision.

No one wants to have to contemplate the ways in which your life as you know it exists because of someone else's oppression. Or if you're Native, you don't want to think about how you are one of the few survivors of one of the most massive campaigns of genocide in world history. But if we don't do that work, then we're choosing to walk away from the crime scene and pretend that it didn't happen. And I can't live my life like that.

Direct Link: <http://www.vice.com/read/native-american-women-are-rape-targets-because-of-a-legislative-loophole-511>

Film explores Native American child displacement

Keith Uhlig, Gannett Central Wisconsin Media 12:28 p.m. CST December 16, 2015



WESTON - A Wausau-area video production company is shining a spotlight on the need for American Indian children to be connected to their culture.

Rucinski & Reetz Communication unveiled last week its video titled "[Missing Threads: The Story of the Wisconsin Indian Child Welfare Act](#)." The hour-long documentary represents nearly three years of work and "explores the connection between family, tribal culture and children, and the consequences of severing those ties," said Susan Reetz, a partner in the communication firm.

At one time, one in four American Indian children were removed from their homes and placed with white families, according to the film. The practice occurred well into the 20th century, spurring the passage of a 1978 federal law called the Indian Child Welfare Act was passed, requiring state, county and private agencies to follow specific processes when removing Indian children from their homes, according to the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families. Those processes sought to ensure that government and private agencies would make an effort to place children in Indian families. The film documents the passage of the Wisconsin Indian Child Welfare Act, which became law in 2009, and was designed to bolster and add to the federal law.

"It really was the deprivation of a race," said retired state senator Robert Jauch, one of the sponsors of the 2009 law. "It was unexcusable, unacceptable and avoidable."

Indian children could have been removed from their families for a variety of reasons, but many were "taken from their homes simply because a paternalistic state system failed to recognize traditional Indian culture and expected Indian children to conform to non-Indian ways," wrote B.J. Jones of the Dakota Plains Legal Services in [a piece published by the American Bar Association](#).

The documentary explores how the practice of placing children in non-Indian families affected individual lives. Forest County Potawatomi Chief Judge Eugene White-Fish and Loa Porter, a Ho-Chunk Nation grandmother, both talk about their experiences of being taken from their families and placed in non-Indian households as children.

"When I was removed from my family, I was 6, maybe going on 7 years old," Porter said in the documentary interview. She remembers her sister screaming as white social workers took them away, her mother watching helplessly.

"It was very, very traumatic," Porter said. "I remember it like it was yesterday."

White-Fish recounts being shuffled from family to family. "I went through six different foster homes in the time before I turned 18," he said. "I went through six different organized religions. It was very confusing because ... I didn't feel like I fit."

The goal of the act is to ensure that child welfare officials, when placing American Indian foster children, do whatever is possible to place them with Indian caregivers, Reetz said. The law means that all efforts should be made to place Indian children with close family members. If that's not possible, they should be placed within their tribe, and if that's not possible, with another Indian family.

Reetz, who co-produced the documentary with Michelle Danforth, said the project was distinctive. "I feel it is an important social issue," she said.

The piece will be used to educate social workers, attorneys, judges and the general public about the issue and how the law works. It debuted at ArtStart in Rhinelander last Saturday. Plans call for the documentary to be shown again to the general public on March 5 at the Green Bay Film Festival. By late spring, the film should be widely available for free viewing on YouTube, Reetz said.

For more information, people may log on to <http://missingthreadswicwa.blogspot.com/>.

Keith Uhlig can be reached at 715-845-0651 or at keith.uhlig@gannettwisconsin.com. Find him on Facebook or on Twitter as [@UhligK](#).

Direct Link:

<http://www.wausaudailyherald.com/story/entertainment/movies/2015/12/16/film-explores-native-american-child-displacement/76924530/>

Brazil politician named racist of the year for comments about indigenous people

Fernando Furtado said 'bunch of little gays' should starve to death Survival International highlights racist threat to Amazon tribes



Fernando Furtado said of Amazonian tribes: 'They don't know how to plant rice, so let them die of hunger in poverty. That's the best thing, because they don't know how to work.' Photograph: Agência Assembleia

Staff and agencies

Wednesday 16 December 2015 17.23 GMTLast modified on Thursday 17 December 201513.02 GMT

A Brazilian lawmaker who said Amazon tribal peoples should be left to starve to death and are “a bunch of little gays” has been named Racist of the Year by the indigenous rights group Survival International.

Fernando Furtado, a lawmaker in Maranhão state, was given the award for a speech he gave in July close to the border of territory of the Awá people, a tribe which has been pushed to the brink of extinction by deforestation and clashes with ranchers.

Addressing an audience of loggers and ranchers, Furtado said: “They don’t know how to plant rice, so let them die of hunger in poverty. That’s the best thing, because they don’t know how to work.”

He also called indigenous people “a bunch of little gays”, the NGO said.



Awá Indians point their bow and arrows in Maranhao state, Brazil. Ranchers and loggers have encroached on their territory. Photograph: Uncredited/AP

Furtado’s outburst triggered an uproar in Brazil and he was forced to issue a formal retraction.

A string of fires have been set by illegal loggers in that region of Maranhão, the latest of them in October. For a month the flames scorched one of the main indigenous territories, threatening the lives of several hundred Awá people.

“This includes a group of uncontacted people, who are one of the most vulnerable societies on the planet,” Survival International said in a statement.

Furtado’s comments should be considered an incitement to racial hatred, the NGO said.

After a government operation to expel loggers from the Awá reserve – prompted by a high-profile campaign by Survival International – there is a strong resentment toward tribes in the region.

“These loathsome remarks indicate the extent of racism against tribal peoples among some of the most powerful people in Brazilian society,” Survival International’s director, Stephen Corry, said.

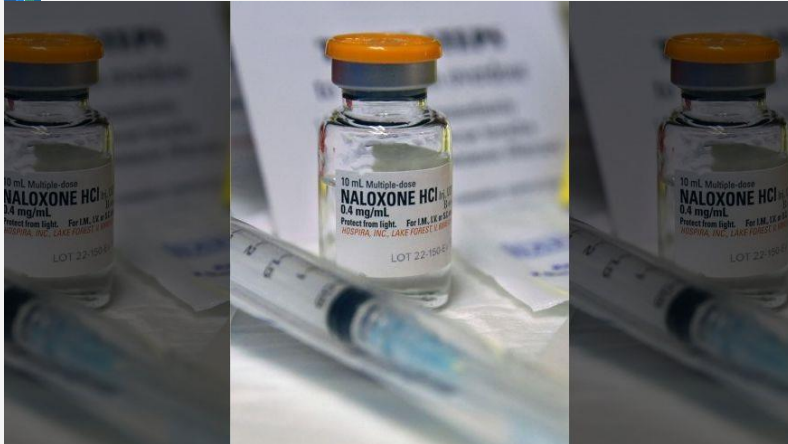
About 900,000 Indians from 305 ethnic groups live in Brazil, out of a total population of 204 million. Their reserves, mostly in the Amazon, account for 12% of Brazil's territory.

But boundaries still remain to be set for much of that Indian land and much of it has been occupied by settlers.

Direct Link: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/16/brazil-politician-named-racist-of-the-year-for-comments-about-indigenous-people>

US starts pilot program to prevent overdoses on Native American lands

Published December 17, 2015



(AP Photo/Mel Evans, file)

OKLAHOMA CITY – Law enforcement working on tribal lands in Oklahoma will carry a [drug that counteracts opioid and heroin overdoses](#) in a pilot program aimed at reducing narcotic-related deaths among Native Americans, officials said on Wednesday.

From as early as next year, Oklahoma's Bureau of Indian Affairs law enforcement officers will be equipped with an atomized version of naloxone, said agencies including the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy and the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs.

"According to the Centers for Disease Control, rates of opioid overdose in Native American communities have increased four-fold from 2009," Michael Botticelli, director of National Drug Control Policy, told a news conference in Tulsa.

Dr. Susan Karol, chief medical officer for Indian Health Services, or IHS, said at the news conference: "BIA officers are often the first to respond to these tragedies."

The naloxone, paid for by IHS, will be dispensed through 91 IHS federal pharmacies, but tribal pharmacies will be welcomed as well, Karol said. There was no price estimate given for the pilot program.

"We have seen a rise in both heroin use and prescription opioid use in Native American communities," Karol said.

Initially, the program will be offered in Oklahoma and eventually go nationwide, officials said. Oklahoma has the country's second-highest percentage of Native Americans in its population.

According to the 2009 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 18.3 of American Indians/Alaskan Natives aged 12 and older were current users of illicit drugs.

"We are dealing with an opioid epidemic, and we need a comprehensive response," said Botticelli.

As of September, 43 U.S. states, as well as Washington, D.C., had laws to increase people's access to naloxone, but they are a patchwork and ease of access varies, said Corey Davis and Derek Carr of the St. Paul, Minnesota-based Network for Public Health Law.

Direct Link: <http://www.foxnews.com/health/2015/12/17/us-starts-pilot-program-to-prevent-overdoses-on-native-american-lands.html>

Man who allegedly stole ancient Native American artifacts from Effigy Mounds to plead guilty

Posted: Dec 16, 2015 3:52 PM MST Updated: Dec 16, 2015 3:52 PM MST
Written by Hillary Maglin, Multimedia Journalist



KWWL.com Links
Cedar Rapids News

CEDAR RAPIDS (KWWL) -

Former National Park Service Superintendent Thomas Munson, 76, has been accused of stealing and concealing ancient Native American artifacts and plans to plead guilty to the charges.

Munson allegedly took the artifacts from Effigy Mounds National Monument in Harpers Ferry, Iowa.

Munson appeared in court for the first time today in Cedar Rapids, and the United States is requesting the next appearance be set at the earliest date possible.

According to the U.S. Attorney for the District of Northern Iowa and the criminal chief, Munson faces up to a year in prison along with other fines and penalties.

The stolen artifacts, which include human teeth, and jaw and leg bones, have been recovered and are now secured back in Effigy Mounds' park collection.

Munson reportedly kept the artifacts in his garage for 20 years, but has yet to provide a reason for his crime.

Iowa officials say they have no reason to believe there's a continuing risk of obstruction of justice in the case, and it has been agreed upon that Munson could be released on bond.

Direct Link: <http://www.kwwl.com/story/30770115/2015/12/16/man-who-allegedly-stole-ancient-native-american-artifacts-from-effigy-mounds-to-plead-guilty>

Recipe: Native American-inspired jerky

[Jake Laxen](#), jlaxen@stcloudtimes.com 8 a.m. CST December 17, 2015



(Photo: Jake Laxen, jlaxen@stcloudtimes.com)

On a recent vacation to Arizona, I discovered the ancient art of pemmican.

A vendor at a Phoenix-area swap meet was selling a modern version of the centuries-old Native American dried meat and berries recipe. The treat is often referred to as an original survivor food.

I've thought a lot about the often-forgotten Native American culinary history since [profiling a Minnesota chef in May who is looking to rediscover the heritage](#). Owning a dehydrator — I received it as a Christmas gift one year — I decided to make my own pemmican-inspired jerky. It's easy to try if you have one too.

While the process of drying the food is much different than when Native Americans would prepare the meat over open fires, I tried to stay true to the original flavors.

I used ground elk meat paired with dried cranberries, two common ingredients for many Native Americans. They add complimentary salty and sweet flavors. And elk meat is a great base as it's leaner than beef, which makes it ideal for jerky making.

I also improvised and added a dash of cayenne pepper for a spicy flavor layer.

Native American-inspired elk jerky



The dehydrator used in the recipe that was given as a Christmas gift. (Photo: Jake Laxen, [jlaxen@stcloudtimes.com](#))

1 pound ground elk meat

3/4 cup dried cranberries

1 packet jerky cure

1 packet jerky regular seasoning

1 tablespoon cayenne pepper

one Combine elk meat, cranberries, cure, seasoning and cayenne pepper evenly in a bowl. Seal and marinate in the refrigerator for at least eight hours.

two Using a jerky gun, make strips on a dehydrator tray. Dehydrate at 160 degrees until strips are like leather, between four and 15 hours.

Source: Based on a Nesco beef jerky recipe.

D'lish in Life

Find more foodie news and recipes, including the #LivingGlobal series, every Wednesday in the Times' D'lish taste section.

Direct Link: <http://www.sctimes.com/story/life/food/recipes/2015/12/17/recipe-native-american-inspired-jerky/77416468/>

New website aims to showcase Native American destinations

By [Jeri Clausing](#) / December 16, 2015



NATIVEAMERICA
.TRAVEL

Experiences Destinations Travel Tips

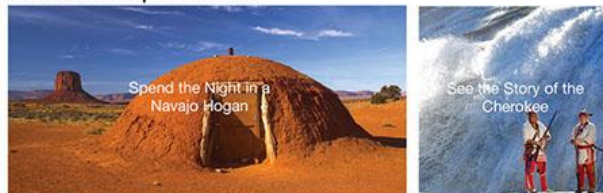


Destinations



Explore all 12 Native American Destination Areas >

Featured Experiences



AIANTA
American Indian Alaska Native
Tourism Association

The new nativeamerica.travel website helps consumers and agents develop itineraries.

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — As travelers increasingly seek out cultural and educational experiences, it should come as no surprise that interest in Native American destinations and attractions has increased over the past five years, setting records in each of the last three, according to the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (Aianta).

Given the remote and far-flung locations of many native lands and cultural sites, however, planning such adventures can be a challenge.

Aianta is hoping to change that with a new website designed to help consumers and travel agents alike craft itineraries that combine Native American educational, cultural and adventure experiences with the best in native-owned hotels and resorts, tour operators, restaurants and other business.

The site, at nativeamerica.travel, is the first such comprehensive project of its kind in the U.S., offering each of the more than 500 federally and state-recognized tribes online space for showcasing their businesses and tourism offerings.

Users can search by region, experiences and destinations and access destination information as well as tools for planning trips.

Nativeamerica.travel is modeled after successful sites launched in Australia and British Columbia to promote aboriginal-focused sites and tours.

Aianta Executive Director Camille Ferguson said the goal of the website, the pilot of which was unveiled at the group's annual conference in Colorado in October, was to help tribes take advantage of the vast economic development opportunities tourism presents beyond casinos and hotels as well as to differentiate their other tourism offerings, including historical tours, adventure packages and luxury resort and meetings destinations.

"More and more people are coming and wanting more than gaming," she said.

The site, Ferguson said, will help tribes promote their historical attractions, art and museums and "portray our image as not a bygone people but people who are here today. ... We want to help them perpetuate their culture, not preserve it — museums do a good job of that. We're trying to encourage tribes to tell their own stories."

Aianta and the site's developers, she said, will also provide tribes with the technical assistance and training to develop tourism. And while it is intended for tribes and native-owned businesses, tribes can use their pages to promote partnerships with non-native businesses — hotels, for example — if there are no tribal-owned accommodations around their attractions.

Users can search by region, experiences and destinations. The site also offers interactive maps and weather information.

In New Mexico, Acoma Pueblo officials say they are eager to use the site to gain new partnerships in nearby Albuquerque. They also hope to use it to overcome several identity

problems, including that of differentiating their Sky City Casino along Interstate 40 from their pueblo's historic Sky City, which is built atop a sheer-walled 367-foot sandstone bluff in a valley studded with sacred, towering monoliths.

The settlement, 70 miles west of Albuquerque, is home to the Anasazi people and the oldest continuously inhabited settlement in North America.

Melvin Juanico, group tour director of the Sky City Cultural Center & Haak'u Museum, said he also hoped the site would help them clear up a common misperception, among international and domestic travelers alike, that the pueblo is in New Mexico, not in Mexico.

The site launched its pilot with content from 13 tribal governments: the Pueblo of Pojoaque, Fort McDowell Yavapai, Eastern Band of Cherokee, Cherokee Nation, United Houma Nation, Sitka Tribe of Alaska, Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, Standing Rock Sioux and the Pueblo of Jemez.

Nativeamerica.travel also has more than 100 listings representing many more tribal-member tourism businesses, including those from Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Pueblo of Acoma, Navajo Nation, Jicarilla Apache Nation, Southern Ute Indian Tribe and Native Village of Mary's Igloo.

Users can search by region, experiences and destinations. And the site offers interactive tools, such as maps and weather information, to help in trip planning.

The site's developers will continue their outreach to gather more broad-based content from tribes and tribal-member-owned tourism enterprises, with the goal in 2016 of more than doubling the number of attractions and accommodations listings on the website and encouraging many more tribes to utilize their dedicated pages.

The website is just one of Aianta's efforts to help tribes capitalize on the growing interest in experiential travel.

With a grant from the National Park Service Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program, it is also producing a guidebook to tell the story of tribal homelands and tribes along the route and to provide cultural context to the Route 66 story.

"With more than 27 federally recognized tribes along Route 66, we are thrilled that we will finally be able to share these under-told histories connected to the famous highway," said Virginia Salazar-Halfmoon, Aianta's public lands partnership coordinator.

Lisa Snell, owner and publisher of the Native American Times and Native Oklahoma magazine, is traveling and researching the entire Route 66 to produce the guidebook, which is expected to be released early next year.

Direct Link: <http://www.travelweekly.com/North-America-Travel/New-website-aims-to-showcase-Native-American-destinations>

Meet The Muxes: Mexican Indigenous Community Where Transsexuals, Transgenders Are Celebrated Since Birth

By [Janel Saldana](#) | Dec 17 2015, 02:53PM EST



Pilar and Nuevo Amanecer, both men who are dressed as traditional Zapotec also known as "Muxe", pose for a photograph inside a women's bathroom during a traditional party in Mexico City, June 29, 2013. Picture taken June 29, 2013. REUTERS/Edgard Garrido

What in other countries is usually labeled as a transgender or a transsexual, in Oaxaca, Mexico, in the indigenous **Muxe** community, it's called a third gender. Anthropologists say that the tradition of blurring genders among Mexico's indigenous population can be traced back centuries, but it has been revived in recent decades due to the gay pride movement.

The **Muxes**, who are mostly of ethnic [Zapotec descent](#), are people who are born as males but assume the role of a woman since birth because according to tradition, that is their orientation. This year marked the 40th anniversary of **La Vela Muxe**, a folkloric event that takes place every November, in which members of the community celebrate Muxes as members of society.

The Muxe community has managed to cross borders and is now being recognized in the United States. **José Pablo Martínez**, who is in charge La Vela Muxe's event in Los Angeles, tells [Hoy Los Angeles](#) "they want to give the Muxe community visibility and demonstrate that the inclusion of sexual diversity is possible, just like it happens in most parts of the Istmo de Tehuantepec region." La Vela Muxe has been celebrated in California since 2013.

In Mexico, *La Asociación Nacional de Comercio y Turismo LGBT* (LGBT National Association of Commerce and Tourism) created [Ruta Istmo](#) (Istmo Route), catalogued as

a Muxe destination that aims to strengthen the Zapoteca gay community. This will be the first touristic route in Oaxaca to support the Muxe identity, their activities and their way of living.

Direct Link: <http://www.latintimes.com/meet-muxes-mexican-indigenous-community-where-transsexuals-transgenders-are-359922>

The Ridiculous 6 proves Hollywood still has 'an Indian problem'

Adam Sandler follows U.S. film tradition, 'reduces indigenous characters to props,' says Jesse Wentz

By Jesse Wentz, [for CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 17, 2015 5:00 AM ET Last Updated: Dec 17, 2015 9:10 AM ET



Adam Sandler's comedic western, *The Ridiculous 6*, has drawn the ire of several critics. (Netflix)

Adam Sandler's *The Ridiculous 6* is awful.

It's important to state that first, as I'm about to devote a lot of words to this film, and I wouldn't want the volume to be misconstrued as an indication of quality.

There is little redeeming here, as the film is as offensive as you've likely already heard and as uninspired a movie as I've seen, always reaching for only the most obvious and well-worn clichés to populate its intended, but utterly inadequate, parody.

I mean, a donkey's intestinal problems is one of the film's defining running gags (because it's an "ass," get it?), so the film never for a moment pretends to be anything but colossally stupid — or "ridiculous," if one is to take the title at face value.

But if it were only a stupid movie about a mule in need of Imodium, I never would have ventured past skipping over its name in my Netflix menu.

However, long before this film ever appeared in my or your queue, it was national news due to a protest by some of the indigenous cast who walked off set after reading the script and its derogatory language directed at women and elders. Upon seeing the final product, one wonders where anyone's agent was in all of this.

The protest stands as a brave and unique event in cinema history, one that disrupts the larger issue at hand: Hollywood continues to have an Indian problem.

'Reductive and racist'

Since the moment Thomas Edison and William Dickson tested their motion picture technology in 1894, using a troupe of indigenous wild west performers as the subjects, American movies have been obsessed with indigenous people, while rarely being concerned with getting anything right about their obsession.

The western is not only America's signature film genre, it's also one of the larger cultural symbols of the history of colonialism on Turtle Island. Its continued presence, akin to outdated sports mascots, is a reminder of a painful history and the colonial social order. Insulting us has rarely, until recently, been a concern.

Sandler is following in a long tradition of American filmmakers who turn to the western and its rich iconography for inspiration.

While Sandler's approach is expectedly more adolescent than say, Jim Jarmusch or Kelly Reichardt, it's not out of step with the desire American filmmakers have shown to embrace the most iconic cinematic genre the nation has created.

Sadler's direct inspiration is more clearly Mel Brooks and his own racially charged western parody, *Blazing Saddles*. Brooks's film, long considered a comedy classic, was originally released in 1974, when its screenplay (largely authored by comedian Richard Pryor), was cutting-edge in its satirical treatment of race, as much provocation as it was silly.

Sandler's film, authored by Sandler and longtime writing partner Tim Herlihy, arrives when discourse around race has moved well past the point that insulting nicknames and reductionist portrayals can be considered provocative.



From Johnny Depp's misguided attempt to resurrect *The Lone Ranger*, pictured here, to James Cameron's thinly veiled allegory *Avatar*, American filmmakers continue to return to indigenous people and the Western as a setting for storytelling that reduces indigenous characters to props, says Jesse Wentz. (Disney/Bruckheimer Films/AP)

There was an opportunity for a film like *The Ridiculous 6* to cleverly use the tropes of the western to display its own fallacy, to comically correct its problematic racial history. But that film would likely need to be made by a different filmmaker.

The Ridiculous 6 attempts to reach *Blazing Saddles'* tone and fails. Perhaps more frustrating, its narrative is more closely hewn from the spaghetti western, a sub-genre of foreign made westerns that rarely depict indigenous people, as they tend to be more concerned with the criminality of the old west and American conflicts with Mexico.

Thus Sandler's inclusion of First Nations is wholly unnecessary, except that it's the indigenous aspects of the story that are the butt of most of the humour. He needed us for the "comedy."

Genre beyond revision

Sandler isn't alone. From Johnny Depp's misguided attempt to resurrect *The Lone Ranger* to James Cameron's thinly veiled allegory *Avatar*, American filmmakers continue to return to indigenous people and the western as a setting for storytelling that reduces indigenous characters to props.

That is the tradition of America's key film genre, so their reference is inherited, as is their inability to see these stories from anything other than a colonial point of view.

While it's certainly no excuse, until it's fully acknowledged that film has been used to shape the image of indigenous people in the public consciousness to benefit colonialism and that this has contributed to a genocide, then this is going to continue.

The western, like indigenous sports mascots, are a product of their time, and that time has passed. While the importance of the genre to the art of filmmaking cannot be denied, neither can its legacy of racism and division.

The awfulness of *The Ridiculous 6* is a symbol of a genre that is beyond revision or parody, one that no longer suggests a great America, but one deeply out of touch with its own history.'- Jesse Wente, film critic and broadcaster

Symptomatic of this larger issue, *The Ridiculous 6* is but a minor event. Its placement on Netflix is as much a comment on the viability of Sandler and this brand of comedy in a theatrical setting, as it is indicative of the audience shift towards streaming.

Its success will likely be forever unknown, as viewership numbers are not shared by Netflix, nor is this the company's primary measure of success.

However, as an indicator of the current status of the western, the awfulness of *The Ridiculous 6* is a symbol of a genre that is beyond revision or parody, one that no longer suggests a great America, but one deeply out of touch with its own history.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/ridiculous-6-hollywood-still-has-indian-problem-1.3368004>